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A TREATISE

ON

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY,

IN WHICH ALL DIFFICULTIES STATED BY ANCIENT AND MODERN SCEPTICS, ARE DISPASSIONATELY DISCUSSED.

HALIFAX:
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1808.

Patrick McCabe Patrick Shaw

TO THE HONORABLE

HENRY AUGUSTUS DILLON,

Colonel of the 101ſt, or DUKE of YORK's Iriſh Regiment, &c. &c. &c.

SIR,

IN theſe few ſheets you will ſee the univerſally admitted principles of Chriſtianity clearly ſtated, and all exceptions taken by the Heathen Philoſophers, *Celſus*, *Creſcentius*, *Lucian*, and *Julian*, the apoſtate, and from them tranſcribed by their ſucceſſors, modern ſceptics, or, as they are called, modern Philoſophiſts, fairly diſcuſſed. No expreſſion, offenſive to any deſcription of Chriſtians, has eſcaped the writer's pen, which he recollects; his ſtrictures are confined to Anti-Chriſtian Works; the authors he has not named, not through any reſpect for their perſons, which the reader will eaſily perceive, but he did not think proper to point out ſources of immorality and error to idle curioſity; nor would he flatter the vanity of an inſignificant ſcribbler by inſerting his name, though it were but to expoſe him to contempt.

He thinks a work of this nature may with great

great propriety be recommended to the protection of a Stateſman, whoſe eloquence in the Senate, and pen in the Cabinet, have been conſecrated to the defence of the general rights of all deſcriptions of Chriſtians; and whoſe conduct, as a military character, has received from this town a moſt honorable teſtimony.

The writer having no claims nor expectancies from power or protection; no fears nor apprehenſions from enmity or malignity, pays this tribute of perſonal eſteem, and begs leave to inſcribe the work to a Nobleman, who is perfectly capable of appreciating its value. And is,

With great reſpect,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

E. B. V. G. Que.

Halifax, *Nov.* 8th, 1808.

LAUS CHRISTO DEO NOSTRO EJUS QUE MATRI SEMPER VIRGINI. E. B.

"*Invisibilia enim ipsius a creturâ mundi, per ea quæ facta sunt, intellecta, conspicuntur : sempiterna quoque ejus virtus et divinitas : ita ut inexcusabiles sint.*" *Ad. Rom. C. I. V.* 20.

THE Apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, speaking of the Heathen philosophers, says, that they were not only criminal but inexcusable in their infidelity : this terrific sentence he founds on the most simple, yet irresistible reason : the invisible power of God, and his divinity, are so manifest in his works that no excuse is admissible in extenuation of the sin of infidelity. His words apply with double force to the pretended philosophers of our days, men, the light of whose understanding has been totally extinguished by the depravity of their hearts ; and the strong impressions made in their early days by a Christian education, entirely effaced by profligacy surpassing that of the Heathens whom St. Paul paints in such strong colouring.

By a train of reasoning to demonstrate the existence of a God, a Supreme Being, all wise, all powerful, and eternal, a first cause, which gave existence to us, and to all the other Beings, which compose the universe ; and continues to support that beauty, that harmony, which we admire in the world, is useless : all reasoning is lost on the man who denies it : his heart is callous, and his head insane. The man whose understanding is not warped by the perverseness of his heart sees and feels it.

In compliance with cuſtom the writer ſimply indicates principles of demonſtration which enforce conviction:

1ſt. Let any man now exiſting be conſidered as the laſt term of a ſeries compoſed of individuals in continued ſucceſſion from the commencement; in that ſeries each individual has been father to his ſucceſſor; except the laſt who has no ſucceſſor; and alſo each individual has been ſon to his predeceſſor, except the firſt, who had no predeceſſor, the firſt man therefore in this ſucceſſion muſt have received an exiſtence from an almighty cauſe not included in the ſucceſſion; the writer ſays, almighty, becauſe nothing ſhort of omnipotence could give exiſtence to a Being, which had no previous exiſtence radically in ſome other. To pretend that in this ſucceſſion there was no firſt man is inconſiſtent with reaſon: a regular ſucceſſion of Beings of the ſame ſpecies without a commencement is impoſſible: there is a laſt term, therefore a firſt: firſt and laſt are relative terms. To aſſert that this firſt man made himſelf, is ridiculous in the extreme, and not leſs abſurd to think him the work of chance: a poſitive effect pre-ſuppoſes a poſitive cauſe, and a cauſe capable of producing the effect. Chance is an empty ſound, it conveys no idea, produces nothing. If you ſuppoſe him the work of nature, you are to conſider that nature ſignifies neither leſs nor more than the mechanical laws by which the material world is governed; that theſe laws have an immediate reference to a Being infinite in power and wiſdom to eſtabliſh theſe ſame laws, and execute them. Every part and particle of the material world is ſubject to theſe laws, and, placed in the ſame circumſtances, act invariably in the ſame manner, and thus declare, to the intelligent world, there dependence on, and implicit obedience to, the orders of their God. "*Cæli enarrant Gloriam Dei.*" Ps. 18, v. 2. Let us now conſider this

argument

argument, the force of which is not to be eluded, in another light:

All the individuals who compose the series in regular succession have existed; the number was not infinite, because it admits an increase, and is, in fact, continually increasing; infinity admits no increase, therefore, there must have been a man to begin the succession, and as he could not by any possibility be son to himself, or to any of his successors, he must have had his existence from some Being not included in the succession. This reasoning is applicable to the different species of animated Beings, which succeed each other by generation, and as not one of them is capable of giving existence, by generation, to a Being of a different species, it is manifest that they must all have received an existence from a Being included in none of those successions. To have recourse to *chance*, to *hazard*, to *nature*, to *some unknown powers in matter*, to the *fortuitous concourse of atoms* and such like causes, which, have no existence but in the imagination of wild speculatists, is unphilosophical: a philosopher assigns no cause incapable of producing the specific effect, which he examines: What ignorance does the man betray who assigns a cause incapable of producing any effect at all.

A second principle of demonstration:

All the Beings which we see or know in this visible world, are contingent, that is, they may or they may not exist: we may conceive them in a state of possibility, not one of them all is capable of giving itself an existence, and much less of giving existence to all the other Beings, which form this visible world; there must therefore be some one Being, self-existent, which we cannot conceive, in a state of mere possibility. Why so? Because it would be possible and impossible at the same time: possible from the supposition, and impossible as it could not give itself existence, and could

not

not receive exiſtence from any other Being, all being ſuppoſed non-exiſtent. A firſt cauſe therefore muſt be ſelf-exiſtent, on which all the Beings, which compoſe this viſible world depend for their exiſtence.

A third principle of demonſtration ;

Infinite perfection is poſſible : we reaſon on ſome of its properties, though our limited underſtanding cannot form an adequate idea of the whole ; an impoſſible Being, a *ſquare circle*, for example, has no properties ; all we conceive of ſuch a repugnant Being is, that the parts of which it is ſaid to be compoſed, or the properties with which it is inveſted, exclude each other. If infinite perfection be poſſible it muſt neceſſarily exiſt. Why ſo? Beeauſe exiſtence is not only the firſt, but the foundation of all perfection.

Whether the belief of a Deity be innate in man, that is impreſſed on his mind, at his entrance into the world, by the author of his being or not, a queſtion which the writer does not undertake to determine, it is certain that there is not, that there never was, a man of ſenſe free from the influence of prejudice or paſſion, who did not believe the exiſtence of a God, and his interference in human affairs ; hence, even amongſt the Heathen nations the mind of man though ſhackled with falſe opinions, abſorbed in ſenſuality, ſubſervient to fictitious divinities, depreſſed by the tyranny of univerſal cuſtom, yet, upon a ſudden emergency, as if awakening from a dream, called on the God of nature : *God knows it, God ſees it, God will requite*, and ſuch like exclamations, not looking to the temples of falſe deities, but to the Heavens, the throne of that God, whom the ſoul of man naturally adores. If there be, as is pretended by a modern writer, ſome ſavage hordes in the wilds of Africa, or America, who know no Being ſuperior to man, and pay no homage to any divinity, it only ſhews that uncivilized man is capable of being degraded from

from the rank which he was intended to hold in the order of created Beings; and the cauſe muſt be deſperate indeed which has recourſe to the ſavage authority of ſuch men.

From paſſing that bold aſſertion, or rather wild conjecture, of this modern anti-chriſtian, unnnoticed, it muſt not be inferred that the writer believes it true: with reſpect to the wildeſt Savages in America, it is abſolutely falſe, and, if we may judge by analogy, and the report of unprejudiced travellers, it is not more true with reſpect to their uncivilized brethren in the deſarts of Africa and in the Aſiatic Iſlands.

From the principles of demonſtration already propoſed, it is incontrovertibly true that there is a ſelf-exiſtent primary cauſe poſſeſſed of all perfection, from which all the Beings which compoſe the viſible world derive their exiſtence, and on which they eſſentially depend for that portion of time, and ſpace, which they occupy in the world; that this primary cauſe is neither matter, nor any particle or element of matter, is equally evident: for whether matter be compoſed of indiviſible elements, or of elements infinitely diviſible, a queſtion foreign to the ſubject, on which we reaſon, it is moſt certainly compoſed of parts, it therefore eſſentially depends on ſome agent, which is not matter, to effect this compoſition, if it be not thought that matter has not only made, but compoſed itſelf according to its own fancy, which is offenſive to common ſenſe. We ſee matter compoſed and decompoſed according to fixed and invariable laws; we ſee matter ſet in motion, the direction, the compoſition, and decompoſition, of its motion are ſo regular, that they are ſubject to mathematical calculation, and we ſee the ſmalleſt particle of matter ſubject to the ſame laws which are invariably obſerved by the heavenly bodies; the man who from theſe facts is not convinced of the abſolute dependance

of

of matter on its maker, and of its blind ſubmiſſion to the laws, which he has eſtabliſhed, for its compoſition, decompoſition, for its motion, and the direction of its motion, muſt be ſtupidly ignorant of the firſt principles of reaſoning, or perverſely obſtinate, and perſevering in an opinion, not ſimply groundleſs, but inſulting to reaſon.

What is ſaid of matter in general, is applicable to every parcel, and particle of matter: no reaſon can be aſſigned why one particle ſhould poſſeſs power, wiſdom and independence excluſively, to have recourſe to latent powers in matter is ridiculous: we know that matter is capable of receiving impreſſions from external agents, and of making impreſſions according to eſtabliſhed laws, the extent of this capacity we do not know, but from this very capacity we know that matter is dependant, that it is paſſive, incapable of forming any plan, or acting in conſequence of any pre-conceived deſign, of courſe incapable of compoſing that order, which ſubſiſts in the viſible world, the beauty, the harmony, and, the almoſt boundleſs extent of which ſo loudly proclaim the power, the wiſdom and the magnificence of its author.

The writer paſſes in ſilence the ſenſeleſs jargon of Atheiſtical writers, who ſeem to vie with each other in the extravagant abſurdity of the different ſyſtems, which they invent, in order, as they pretend, to account for the preſent order of things, without having recourſe to a primary cauſe.

To the inventive faculties of theſe gentlemen the world is indebted for knowing, that man is a ſort of monkey, in cunning ſurpaſſing the common baboon; as they advance in knowledge we may expect to hear, how a goat made a horſe, or a table built a houſe.

Theſe men, in general, extremely ignorant, yet ambitious of literary fame, conſcious of their inability to ſucceed in common purſuits, endeavour to attract notice

notice by the affected ſingularity of their conceits; to this they add ſtrong declamation charged with invective, which, from the irritability of human nature, is well calculated to inſure ſucceſs. It is uſeleſs to enquire if there be Atheiſts in the world: that there are men who affect to believe there is no God is certain; that there are many who live as if they do not believe the exiſtence of a God is equally certain: that there are men who, on pretended principles of demonſtration, do not believe a God to exiſt, is uncertain.

We know that of civilized Heathens none were ſo impious as to deny the exiſtence of ſome powerful and immortal Being, which ſuperintends this viſible world either immediately or by ſubordinate agents, if you except thoſe ſects, whoſe abominable maxims were known to excite public indignation, who from the practice of ſuch maxims had every thing to fear and nothing to hope. Though the Heathens, abſorbed in ſenſual pleaſures, did not aſcribe omnipotence, and all perfections, to the Deity, yet the idea of a God, however diſfigured, was not totally effaced from their minds. Of apoſtates from the Chriſtian faith there may be ſuch monſters: God in puniſhment of their crimes may ſo far extinguiſh the light of their underſtanding as to efface his own impreſſion from their minds.

An Atheiſt, can he be an honeſt man? Yes, if he be not expoſed to a delicate or dangerous temptation, with which he may by diſhoneſty comply, and eſcape public notice with honor and impunity: if he be honeſt in ſuch a conjuncture he is a fool: why may not the actions of an Atheiſt from ſome impulſe of nature be inconſiſtent with his principles at times, ſince we ſee men who believe a God the avenger of crimes, act inconſiſtently with this belief? The Atheiſt therefore may at times be honeſt and upright through an impulſe of nature, notwithſtanding the perverſe tendency of his principles.

ciples, as the Theiſt may at times notwithſtanding the purity of his principles be depraved through the corruption and inſtability of human nature.

This primary agent, on which the viſible world depends, is of neceſſity ſelf-exiſtent, eternal and independent: theſe are perfections, which muſt be aſcribed to a Being poſſeſſing all poſſible perfection: for if you exclude any one of them, you annihilate the idea of a Being infinitely perfect: non-exiſtence deſtroys all ſorts of perfection; and a dependent or temporary exiſtence argues abſolute imperfection, from which a Being infinitely perfect is free; our imagination cannot reach eternity, nor can our underſtanding form an adequate idea of infinite perfection. True, for this ſimple reaſon, theſe faculties in us are limited and cannot extend beyond their ſphere; but our underſtanding eaſily conceives that ſome agent muſt be eternally exiſtent, to give exiſtence to the many Beings which now exiſt; that this agent muſt be omnipotent, as nothing leſs than omnipotence can give exiſtence to a Being, which had none; that this agent muſt be omniſcient, to determine the nature, the properties, the qualities, the place and poſition of ſuch an immenſe variety of Beings forming one whole, in all its parts ſo wonderfully diverſified by the uſeful and the ornamental; that this agent, infinite in power and wiſdom, is infinite in all perfections, becauſe infinity excludes all limitations, and the perfection of any Being is correſpondent to its nature, hence boundleſs perfection in any Being, limited in its nature, is impoſſible, and any limitation of perfection in a Being infinite in its nature, is equally impoſſible.

Theſe are ſimple truths within the ſphere of human underſtanding. To pretend that we know nothing of a Being, becauſe we cannot form an adequate idea of all its properties, or becauſe our limited underſtanding cannot

cannot clearly and distinctly conceive the nature and qualities of any Being, to say that such a Being does not exist, is to contradict the sense of mankind: Thus for example though we do not know all the properties of a Dog, we know that a Dog is not a Horse; and though we cannot form an idea of the nature, or physical constitution of that animal, or determine the springs which give it motion, we know that there are dogs, and many in the world, and that they are frequently in motion. On the same principles, though we cannot conceive a distinct idea of the nature and perfections of a primary cause, yet as we see a visible world, which is not self-existent, which has not made itself, and as we see the different parts, which compose this world placed in a certain order, and preserving for ages their relative position, knowing that not one of these parts was capable of assuming or preserving its relative position, and in fine as we see all the Heavenly Bodies, these vast masses of inert matter, placed at such an amazing distance one from the other, yet mutually connected and dependent in their motions, we must be ignorant indeed, if we do not know that there exists a primary cause eternal, independent, omnipotent and omniscient, which gave this visible world existence, which formed its different parts, placed them in their respective positions, established these laws of motion by which the symmetry and harmony of the whole is preserved.

To have recourse to an infinite succession of causes and effects without a primary cause, strongly marks the ignorance of the Atheistical writer. For if it be impossible for an effect to exist without a cause, it will be at least equally impossible for many effects to exist without a cause, and the height of absurdity to pretend, that an infinite number of effects could exist without a cause; which must be the case in the supposition of an

infinite ſucceſſion, as all the cauſes in that ſucceſſion muſt have been effects of preceding cauſes. Hence the Atheiſt under pretence of removing a difficulty encreaſes it, or rather makes it infinitely great. To ſay nothing of the abſurdity of an infinite ſucceſſion continually increaſing, as if infinity were capable of any increaſe.

The immutability of this primary cauſe is an immediate and neceſſary conſequence of the abſolute neceſſity of its exiſtence: for as this cauſe is eſſentially ſelf-exiſtent, it cannot poſſibly ceaſe to exiſt, no more than a circle can ceaſe to be round; and as no being either created or increated is in exiſtence without properties correſpondent to its nature, hence it follows that the properties or perfections of an increated and eternal Being are increated and eternal, the perfections of a Being eſſentially exiſtent, are eſſentially exiſtent, cannot of courſe ceaſe to exiſt, can neither increaſe nor diminiſh, this primary cauſe therefore cannot ceaſe to be, nor are its perfections ſubject to the ſhadow of mutation.

Juſtice, wiſdom, goodneſs, &c. in created Spirits are accidental qualities, becauſe their ſpirits are in their nature contingent, and from a ſtate of non-exiſtence, have been by the almighty power of a primary cauſe brought into exiſtence; their qualities are correſpondent to their nature, they may exiſt, or ceaſe to exiſt, and conſequently increaſe or diminiſh; but in God this primary cauſe there are no accidental qualities: They are incompatible with the divine nature. God is not ſaid to be good and juſt as if goodneſs and juſtice were qualities inherent in him; but becauſe that he is in himſelf the ſource of all goodneſs, and the fountain of all juſtice.

He is equally immutable in his decrees: for as he cannot increaſe in knowledge, he can have no motive to change, and to change without a motive is an argument of levity inconſiſtent with his nature.

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This primary cauſe is infinite in its nature and in all its perfections : limitation argues a dependence on ſome other cauſe or receptacle, which in a primary cauſe is repugnant, and ſince the primary cauſe has not given, nor could not give itſelf exiſtence, nor properties correſpondent to its exiſtence, it can give them no limitation. The infinitude therefore of its nature and perfections is manifeſt.

Some perfections, ſuch as juſtice and mercy infinite, may ſeem inconſiſtent. To obviate this difficulty, which may embarraſs the uninformed mind, it muſt be conſidered that juſtice is not ſaid to be infinite becauſe it never remits any part of the penalty, it would confound juſtice with cruelty, and totally exclude clemency. In the caſe of vindictive juſtice, the only ſpecies of juſtice which can at all be thought inconſiſtent with mercy, the puniſhment of the criminal is intended to ſecure tranquility, to ſatisfy the injured, and prevent future aggreſſion ; if theſe objects be attained without inflicting the whole of the puniſhment, is not clemency conſiſtent with juſtice ? God is ſaid to be infinitely juſt, not becauſe he never forgives, nor remits any part of the puniſhment due, but becauſe he never remits without ſome cauſe known to his wiſdom, which is his rule of action ; in like manner he is ſaid to be infinitely merciful, not becauſe he never puniſhes ; but becauſe there is no crime ſo great, which he may not pardon, when he is to forgive, or when he is to puniſh his infinite wiſdom and ſovereign will determines. A temporal Prince either through ignorance, or inattention (the reſpect due to God's repreſentative, does not permit the writer to make uſe of a more harſh term) frequently pardons regardleſs of juſtice ; and as frequently puniſhes in prejudice of clemency, forgetting that he is himſelf ſubject to the natural law, and accountable to God, if not to his ſubjects, for the uſe or abuſe of the

power

power with which he is invested: the abuse of power is impossible in our God: he is neither subject to ignorance, prejudice, precipitation nor malice: they are incompatible with his nature, he pardons or he punishes according to the dictates of sovereign wisdom; so that mercy and justice are so far from being inconsistent in him, that they are not even distinct, but all one and the same identified with his essence. This primary cause is one simple and indivisible: if more than one, they would be distinguished by some perfection or imperfection, all imperfection is excluded from a Being infinitely perfect, and one cannot possess a perfection which the other does not, it would argue a defect, hence there could be no distinction, consequently no plurality.

This primary cause essentially self-existent and giving existence to all other Beings must possess the plenitude of being, therefore there cannot be a second: because in that supposition neither would possess the Being possessed by the other, neither formally, nor eminently, as the Creator possesses all the perfections of his creatures, consequently neither the one nor the other would possess the plenitude of being.

This reasoning is applicable to the wisdom, to the knowledge, to the power, to all the attributes of the Deity: their plenitude evidently excludes a plurality of Gods.

A second principle of demonstration is assumed from the unity of the world; the disposition of all its parts, their mutual connection, and dependence, shew them to have been formed and placed in their respective positions by the same Architect: if they had been formed and placed by different architects that mutual dependance, which Astronomers calculate with mathematical precision, could not subsist. To have recourse to a mutual agreement between agents equal in power shews the dependence of each on the other and excludes a supreme and independent power. The

The Heathen philoſophers from the unity of the world, the harmony and ſymmetry, the mutual connection and dependence of all its parts, ſaw the neceſſity of admitting one ſupreme and independent God, it is aſtoniſhing, that they did not ſee the abſurdity of fictitious Deities, ſubordinate and dependent, as if ſubordination and dependence were not totally irreconcileable with the divine nature.

In this viſible world there are ſo many appearances, which ſeem to contradict the idea of the whole being diſpoſed by ſovereign wiſdom; and in the moral world ſo many actions which ſeem inconſiſtent with the general principles of human nature, that ſome Philoſophers unable to account for theſe appearances in the viſible world, and much leſs for the innumerable evils, which are manifeſt in the moral world, thought there were two principles equal and independent. The one ſovereignly good, the other ſovereignly evil. This opinion abſurd in itſelf, and contradictory in the terms, as one firſt principle, evidently excludes a ſecond, has been revived, and embelliſhed by ſome modern writers, no abſurdity is too groſs for men, who graſp at particular applauſe. *Popularis auræ vile Mancipium.* To obviate the difficulties which are propoſed by theſe writers, and invalidate all the reaſons, which are offered in defence of this ridiculous opinion, it muſt be conſidered that a primary cauſe acts by general laws, it gives motion to all ſecondary cauſes, but does not deprive them of that action which is correſpondent to their nature, hence whenever any defect appears, it muſt proceed from the obſtruction which one ſecondary cauſe gives the other, the primary cauſe does not produce the defect, nor indeed the ſecondary, a defect has no efficient cauſe, it argues a deficiency, which muſt be found in all ſecondary cauſes, becauſe they are limited. As to any monſtrous appearance or

any

any derangement in the visible world, they are evidently defects; for where there is no defect, there is nothing monstrous, no derangement. Hence we easily conceive that, all these defective appearances are natural consequences of the plan, which the great Architect of this visible world proposed, and the laws, which he in consequence established.

This reasoning is applicable with equal force to the moral world: for all the disorders, all the crimes, and evils consequent and antecedent to these crimes, all the miseries, of which they are productive, are the natural consequences of that liberty of determination, and action, which is natural to man, and without which he would not be a man, but an automaton, a machine set in motion by springs at the option of an external agent.

But why not deprive man of that liberty which is so pernicious to himself and others? This simple reply may suffice. Because man is not a machine, nor was he intended to be set in motion by springs, or the laws of attraction and adhæsion, which inanimate matter obeys.

This question proposed under a thousand different forms, and incessantly repeated, betrays an inexhaustible fund of ignorance. It might be asked with equal propriety, or rather with less absurdity, why man is not deprived of his legs and arms, for he frequently abuses both: and a man deprived of reason, the foundation of free agency, is a more deplorable object, than a man without legs or arms.

To say that a God sovereignly good is obliged to avert all evil from his creatures is an assertion which surpasses if possible the former in absurdity. Why so? Because evil is not a positive existing Being, it consists in some defect, and all creatures are essentially defective. To oblige him then to avert all evil, is to oblige him to

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create Beings infinitely perfect, which is impossible. But is he not obliged to avert moral evil, *that is*, the perverse actions of intelligent creatures, and the miseries consequent thereto? From himself unquestionably. Hence he can do nothing inconsistent with sovereign wisdom, which is his rule of action; nor can he command, exhort, advise, consent to, or countenance any moral action in his creatures inconsistent with the dictates of right reason, or what is called the natural law. To oblige him to deprive man of that liberty of determination, and action, which as man he possesses; which is not simply a gift of the greatest value to man, as the right use of it founds his happiness here and hereafter; but one of the constituent attributes of man, to oblige him, I say to deprive man of that liberty is, in other terms, to say, that he ought not to have made man a rational Being. But could he not prevent the abuse of liberty? Most certainly. He wants neither power nor wisdom to do it. Why not prevent it? For reasons known to his wisdom. This last question is not less impertinent than if it were asked, why he did not make the Frog as pleasing to the sight as the Peacock. And the answer equally simple. Because he thought proper to make the one a Frog, and the other a Peacock.

That liberty is grossly abused, we know by experience; that it is not abused with impunity, the man, who does not know it now, will certainly know it hereafter, the man, who does not believe it, thinks a God of infinite sanctity capable of encouraging iniquity, an opinion more absurd never insulted the sense of mankind.

But supposing a criminal abuse of liberty foreseen, and a perseverance to the end of life, entailing endless misery, is it consistent with sovereign goodness to create a man in this supposition? It would be inconsist-

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ent, not only with goodneſs and mercy, but with juſtice and ſanctity, to create a man for that end, and with that view, or to beſtow on man liberty, the proper uſe of which would be impoſſible, and the abuſe natural and neceſſary; but to create a man a free agent, the proper uſe of whoſe liberty is natural, though not neceſſary, and the abuſe of which is unnatural, though not impoſſible, is perfectly conſiſtent with goodneſs and mercy. Why ſo? Becauſe the abuſe of any thing good in itſelf does not make it bad, it only ſhews the perverſeneſs of the perſon, who abuſes it. The very abuſe of liberty ſhews the excellence of the gift: for what is bad cannot be abuſed. The corruption of the mind, by the perverſeneſs of the will, ſhews the native goodneſs of human nature. Why ſo? Becauſe corruption deprives a ſubſtance of a certain degree of goodneſs, it muſt therefore poſſeſs, it and though reduced in goodneſs, whilſt it remains in exiſtence, the ſubſtance is yet good, becauſe it is yet corruptible. If it be not ſaid that corruption renders a ſubſtance incorruptible, the greateſt of all abſurdities.

From this reaſoning it is evident that all ſubſtances are good in themſelves. That evil is nothing poſitive, that it conſiſts in the corruption of what is good, argues a deficient, not an efficient cauſe. If a previous knowledge of the abuſe of any gift were a ſufficient inducement to retract it, there are but few of the gifts of God, to his creatures, which would not be withdrawn: are not the very neceſſaries of life abuſed? Yet what man in his reaſon will pretend that theſe gifts are not good in themſelves, and worthy of their Author? If therefore an intelligent Being, through the perverſeneſs of his own will, abuſes that reaſon, which conſtitutes it intelligent, and diſtinguiſhes it from all creatures, which are not intelligent, giving it a decided ſuperiority, in the order of created Beings, it is but juſt and reaſonable

reaſonable that it ſhould be excluded from the rank which it was intended to hold; and though this excluſion, and the miſery conſequent to it, be not a good to the Being which ſuffers, it is good that it ſhould ſuffer: becauſe juſtice requires it, and in all this there is nothing which is not perfectly conſiſtent with the idea of a Being ſovereignly good, and ſovereignly oppoſite to evil, which it can neither encourage nor countenance.

To conclude, there is no inconvenience that God ſhould create a Spirit, active and intelligent, free from external or internal reſtraint in its determinations, though he foreſees that, this Spirit will abuſe its powers, and perſevere in that depraved ſtate: why ſo? Becauſe however perverſe, malicious or depraved, it yet ſurpaſſes all inanimate Beings; in the dignity of its nature it is ſuperior to the material world, and there is but the dignity of its nature to be aſcribed to its Maker, its malice and depravity to itſelf. The furious tyger is ſuperior to the inoffenſive ſtone, and the drunkard to the wine which intoxicates him. The wine is good, the man, though intoxicated, better. If it be conſiſtent with ſovereign goodneſs to create the wine why not the man? Non-exiſtence may appear preferable to endleſs miſery. Diſpoſed as the writer is at preſent he would not heſitate nor deliberate on the choice; yet if we judge by experience the contradictory is true: for all men are expoſed to inevitable miſery, and few, who are not actually involved in it; yet life in miſery is preferred to death, and the Atheiſt, of all wretched men, the moſt wretched here, fears death moſt, notwithſtanding that ſtate of non-exiſtence, which he fondly promiſes himſelf.

From what has been ſaid on this ſubject, appears the extravagance of aſcribing to a Being ſovereignly malignant, what is called evil, whether phyſical or moral,

for ſuch a Being, if a ſubſtance muſt be good, all ſubſtances are, and if not a ſubſtance, cannot be an agent, can produce nothing.

Beſides all the evils, of which the world complains, are natural conſequences of the plan propoſed and the order eſtabliſhed by its great Creator. The very complaint of evil is an acknowledgment that the order itſelf is good; becauſe evil is nothing elſe but a deviation from this order. As to the objections drawn from the premature death and ſufferings of children, and the pains, to which unoffending beaſts, are ſubject, they will be diſcuſſed in the courſe of this work.

It may not be unneceſſary to obſerve that a ſtate of trial, in which an intelligent Being acting with rectitude according to the dictates of that reaſoning faculty, which diſtinguiſhes it, may attain happineſs, and if perverting this faculty and abuſing its powers of determination and action, it may be expoſed to miſery, is perfectly conſiſtent with the idea which we have of the wiſdom, the goodneſs and juſtice of the Supreme Being.

Wiſdom is the ſource and principle of order: order requires, that rectitude of conduct, when freely choſen, ſhould be rewarded, and that depravity, if obſtinate and perſevering, when rectitude is poſſible, ſhould be chaſtiſed, a ſtate of trial is therefore conſiſtent with wiſdom.

It is equally conſiſtent with goodneſs, to reward virtue when free from reſtraint, is an effect of goodneſs, a ſtate in which virtue and vice are equally poſſible, is therefore conſiſtent with it. An action if not free from external or internal neceſſity, may be virtuous or vicious, but not the agent. The agent and not the action deſerves reward or puniſhment; it is therefore of indiſpenſable neceſſity that to deſerve either reward, or puniſhment, the action ſhould be the effect of choice.

choice. That this ſtate of trial is conſiſtent with juſtice is evident on the expoſition: juſtice gives to every man that, which of right belongs to him. If he be not maſter of his actions, he has no title, he deſerves neither reward nor puniſhment. Is a man who falls from a houſe, though he may eſcape unhurt, entitled to a reward? Or a ſoldier who does not fly over a rampart deſerving of puniſhment?

To obviate numberleſs difficulties propoſed by wild ſpeculatiſts and practical Atheiſts, who from the irregularity of their conduct, having nothing to hope, and every thing to fear, endeavor to perſuade themſelves, and others, that there is not a God; or if there be, that he muſt be indifferent to actions, as they pretend, of inevitable neceſſity. It muſt be conſidered that philoſophers proceed to demonſtrate the exiſtence of any cauſe *à priori* as they term it, that is by ſhewing immediately that the cauſe does exiſt, and why it exiſts, or *á poſteriori*, that is, concluding from the effects, the exiſtence of the cauſe. The former is the more forcible and the more perſuaſive: the conviction, which it impreſſes on the mind is not to be effaced; the latter mode of demonſtration if inconſiſtent with the former, muſt contain a fallacy, whether the human mind detects it or not, becauſe truth is not incompatible with truth, but veriſimilitude is reconcileable with falſhood; hence it follows that all the difficulties, which are propoſed, or the objections, which can poſſibly be ſtated againſt a truth founded on immediate demonſtration are ineffectual. Whether theſe objections appear capable of an immediate and deciſive ſolution, or incapable, they only argue the fertility of the inventor's imagination, or the limitation of his underſtanding, but they cannot affect the truth.

It muſt be alſo remarked that there are numberleſs truths capable of immediate demonſtration, with reſ-

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pect to certain claſſes in ſociety, which, with reſpect to others, are not only incapable of demonſtration, but abſolutely repugnant to their ideas: thus an Aſtronomer demonſtrates on phyſical, and mathematical principles, the magnitude of any planet, its denſity, if there be an attendant ſatellite, its attractive force and extent, the figure of its orbit, and time of its revolution, all which truths are as myſterious to the unlettered Captain, as the moſt inconceivable truths of religion. Mathematical and phyſical truths he implicitly believes, becauſe they lay him under no reſtraint, the truths of religion he denies, becauſe they contradict his vicious inclinations; againſt the former he offers no objection, becauſe he does not underſtand the ſubject; againſt the latter, though equally ignorant, he ſtates a thouſand difficulties. The gratification of his ſenſual appetites, is therefore the motive of his judgment, and his only rule of action, ſo true it is, that no man ever denied the exiſtence of a God but he, who feared his juſtice; nor did any man ever think him inſenſible or indifferent to his actions, if they were not vicious. To this may be added that, there are truths, capable of the moſt rigid demonſtration, not only inconceivable to the unlettered but to the informed part of mankind, and which, in fact appear repugnant to reaſon; thus, for example, the Mathematician demonſtrates the hyperbolical curve, if extended to infinity, inceſſantly approaches its aſſymptots, but cannot touch them. The demonſtration of this truth, however repugnant it may appear to our ideas, is mathematically exact, therefore all objections againſt this truth in whatever form they are ſtated, whatever appearance of demonſtration they may aſſume, whether capable of ſolution or not, are fallacious.

Theſe principles ſolve in the moſt deciſive manner, all the objections ſtated by Atheiſts againſt the exiſtence

ence of a God, and by Deiſts againſt his ſuperintending providence : they give a ſimple and ſatisfactory anſwer to all their enquiries. If there be a God the Creator of all things, why create the tyger, the rattle-ſnake? Why the fly or the beetle? The writer does not know why he created them; but as they are not ſelf-exiſtent, have not made themſelves, could not be made by any other Being equally impotent, they muſt have been created, and, as there is no action without an agent, there muſt be a Creator, though the writer does not know for what immediate end he created a vaſt number of creatures diſguſting to our ſight, and taſte, and noxious to our bodies, yet in their proportions, their preſervation, and propagation, he ſees the moſt evident marks of his power and wiſdom.

This anſwer is applicable to the enquiries of the Manichean, and modern Philoſopher. If there be but one principle ſovereignly good, why does he ſuffer moral evil? We do not know why he permits it, but we know that a Being ſovereignly malignant is a mere chimæra: for by a Being ſupremely malignant is underſtood, either a Being infinitely oppoſite to a Being ſovereignly good, or a Being poſſeſſed of the ſame perfections, ſubſtituting malevolence in the place of benevolence. There is but a non-entity deſtitute of every perfection and infinitely oppoſite to a Being poſſeſſed of all perfection, a non-entity cannot be an agent either good or bad. Wiſdom, power, juſtice, mercy and malevolence are attributes which exclude each other. So that no ſuch Being exiſts or can exiſt. Hence then whether we can or cannot account for the exiſtence of moral evil under the direction of one God ſovereignly good, to admit a malevolent principle independent of equal power, wiſdom, &c. is a groſs abſurdity.

That pretended indifference, which the modern Philoſopher has introduced, with which he feeds his fancy,

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and flatters his ſenſuality, is equally abſurd : the vigilant attention of the Creator to the inanimate, and irrational part of this viſible world, is evident in the motion of the Heavenly Bodies, the invariable laws to which they are ſubject ; in the preſervation, and propagation of the ſeveral ſpecies of brutes. What extravagance to pretend that he ſhould neglect the rational part of the world ? That his cares ſhould be confined to the more ignoble part of his works, and the intelligent part, from which only he can obtain his tribute of praiſe and gratitude, be neglected ? But ſays the Deiſt if his providence ſuperintends the world why permit ſo many diſorders which are evident in the world ? The writer replies once more we do not know why he permits them ; but ſince they are diſorders, therefore there is an univerſal order, for a diſorder is neither leſs nor more than a deviation from order, and where there is no order there can be no deviation from it, an univerſal order argues an univerſal cauſe to eſtabliſh and ſupport it ; the man who pretends that in the world there is neither order nor diſorder, that human actions are neither virtuous nor vicious, all equal and indifferent, to murder a loving mother not more criminal than to ſave her from the jaws of a hungry lion, is not to be reaſoned with, but either confined in a mad houſe, or hunted from ſociety like a wild beaſt of the moſt deſtructive kind.

The Chriſtian Philoſopher aſſigns the moſt ſatisfactory reaſons to juſtify providence in the diſtribution of good and evil in the preſent life, and from that diſtribution concludes the immortality of the ſoul with the utmoſt certainty. That ſubject will be diſcuſſed in the courſe of this work. We ſhall now proceed to conſider our God, this primary cauſe, under another point of view, *that is*, as infinitely intelligent.

It is ſaid of man that he knows, when he ſees, hears, feels

feels or remembers, what he has seen, heard or felt, or draws conclusions from his ideas and sensations. This is not applicable to God: in him there is no mutability of thought, no transition from thought to thought, no conclusions drawn from principles, no train of reasoning: that mind is most comprehensive, which contemplates the greatest number of objects at the same instant, and by the same act. God being infinite in all his attributes, his mind infinitely comprehensive, views all objects past, present, future and possible by the same act and at the same instant, this act of contemplation in God is not any thing distinct from the divine nature, it is God himself contemplating. The science of God being identified with the divine nature, is infinite as the divine nature, and immutable; science in man is an inherent quality, from the limitation of the human mind it cannot exceed a certain measure, God is known to us in part, we know him to be incomprehensible to any created understanding, but the science of God being identified with the divine nature God perfectly knows himself, and sees himself, immediately in his own nature, from the infinitude of the divine nature no created object can represent it, hence God sees all his creatures in himself, that is, in his essence; but he cannot see his essence in his creatures, for even collectively taken they cannot possess that perfection, which is necessary to represent the divine essence, God therefore sees himself immediately in his own nature. It is manifest that all his creatures are known to him, whether they actually exist, are to exist, or remain in a state of mere possibility. Why so? Because as he perfectly knows himself he knows his power of creating, and his will: the existence of all created Beings being solely dependent on the will of God, he must know them, or they could not exist, and all the effects of causes determined by the laws, which he has established for the preservation

preſervation and direction of the material world are equally dependent on his will, there are therefore but the determinations of free agents, the actions of intelligent Beings ſubject to any difficulty ; but as the exiſtence of many creatures depends eventually on theſe determinations of free agents, and the exiſtence of all creatures depends eſſentially on the will of God, it is impoſſible that he ſhould foreſee the one without foreſeeing the other : the exiſtence of all his creatures he muſt know, he muſt of courſe know the determinations of intelligent and free agents, by which as ſecondary cauſes, he gives exiſtence to many of his creatures. This preſcience in God is infallible, eternal and immutable : there is nothing in God which is not ſo, nothing which is not identified with his nature ; but it impoſes no ſort of neceſſity on the free agent : for at the ſame time that God knows that, ſuch or ſuch an agent will form ſuch or ſuch a determination, produce ſuch or ſuch an act, he knows that the agent will determine itſelf, and act freely, if the agent be active and free in its nature ; or be determined by ſome external cauſe, if the agent be incapable of determining itſelf. Why ſo? Becauſe all ſecondary cauſes act according to their nature ; hence though the preſcience of God be immutable, the action is contingent, becauſe the preſcience of God is identified with his nature, and immutable as he is himſelf ; but the action which is the object of this preſcience, is inherent in one of his creatures, contingent as all creatures are, free if the creature be free, and neceſſitated, if it be a blind cauſe.

What God foreſees will infallibly happen. True, but it will happen as he foreſees it, that is, freely if the agent be free from reſtraint, or neceſſarily if the agent be ſubject to internal or external neceſſity. But what God foreſees muſt of all neceſſity happen ; yes, for it is not poſſible to foreſee an event which will not happen, if,

If therefore the event be foreſeen, it will infallibly happen; but this preſcience impoſes no neceſſity on the agent, nor is it the mediate, or immediate cauſe of its determination: thus for example if I ſee a man fall from a houſe, the man muſt of all neceſſity fall, or it would be impoſſible for me to ſee him fall; but my ſight impoſes no neceſſity on the man, nor is it the mediate or immediate cauſe of his fall: it is not becauſe God foreſees the man's determination that the man determines to act in ſuch or ſuch a manner; but it is becauſe the man determines, that God foreſees it; as in the caſe of the fall, it is not becauſe I ſee him that the man falls; but it is becauſe he falls that I ſee him.

But if the man did not come to that preciſe determination God would be deceived! No, for he would not have foreſeen it, it is impoſſible to foreſee an event which will not happen.

To obviate a difficulty, which may ſeem embarraſſing, that is, how it is poſſible to foreſee the determination of the mind, which is in itſelf indetermined, and miſtreſs of its actions, it muſt be conſidered that the mind is itſelf dependent on God for its exiſtence, and that all its inclinations are known to him, as are alſo the particular circumſtances in which it is placed, this is certainly more than ſufficient to ſhew a Being of infinite intelligence, what will be its determination. This preſcience of God ſees the effect which is not yet in exiſtence, but will infallibly happen, though it is not the cauſe of that effect, nor does it impoſe any neceſſity on the agent, as if by revelation I know that it will rain on a certain day: can any previous knowledge be conſidered as the cauſe of the rain? If the medium aſſigned be thought inſufficient to juſtify the infallibility and immutability of God's preſcience, let it be conſidered alſo that God is independent on his creatures, that they are all dependent on him; that his preſcience

identified with his nature is immutable and infallible as the divine nature; he therefore invariable in himself, ſees all things vary, unchangeable in himſelf he ſees all things change, without any ſucceſſion of thought, or tranſition from thought to thought, he ſees all things in ſucceſſion. In what medium? In himſelf, that is, in his will, all thoſe beings, which are determined to have an exiſtence in any circumſtance of time; in his power, all Beings, which are merely poſſible, and all their poſſible relations; in the order of cauſes he ſees their effects, and as the human will is the immediate cauſe of its own actions, and determinations, in the will he ſees its determinations. The exiſtence of an immenſe variety in the ſucceſſion of Beings, depends on, or rather reſults from the determinations of the human will; does it follow that, God in giving exiſtence to theſe Beings, is dependent on the determinations of the will in the execution of the plan which he has propoſed in the creation of the world and the ſucceſſion of the Beings which compoſe it? No! but it follows that, from eternity he ſaw at the ſame inſtant, and in the ſame view, all cauſes and effects whether naturally reſulting, or free determinations, that of courſe he is dependent on the order which he himſelf eſtabliſhed in the execution of his plan; and ſince in the order of Beings there are many intellectual cauſes, he owes to himſelf to preſeve their nature entire, taking the reſult of their determinations into the plan of his operations.

As in his eſſence God ſees all his creatures, has a clear, a diſtinct and adequate knowledge of their nature, and operations, it may be ſuſpected that evil being a corruption of nature God may not know it, as in the divine eſſence there is no example of evil: to this the writer replies that evil is known by its oppoſite good, as falſhood is known by its oppoſite truth, neither

ther evil nor falſhood can be known in themſelves, or in any repreſentation, falſhood is a negation of truth, and evil a negation of goodneſs, negations have no qualities, of courſe cannot be repreſented.

It is uſeleſs to remark that this primary cauſe infinitely perfect is not matter, nor any particle or element of matter: matter is ſo far from being infinitely perfect, that it is ſubject to all ſorts of imperfections; all matter is compoſed. A more powerful agent is therefore neceſſary to effect this compoſition, every element of matter is circumſcribed and dependent on the circumjacent elements for the place which it occupies in this viſible world, which is inconſiſtent with the nature of a primary cauſe infinite and independent.

It was formerly aſſerted by an impious Atheiſt, under the aſſumed title of Philoſpher, that in this viſible world there was but one indiviſible ſubſtance, that all other things were but modifications of this one ſubſtance, which he qualified with the title of God, ſo that the ox's horns and the aſs's ears were but modifications of this pretended God. They might ſerve to adorn the head of the inventor of a ſyſtem, in which it is difficult to determine whether impiety or abſurdity prevails.

No abſurdity can be greater than to pretend that an univerſal ſubſtance exiſts, and not individuals in which it exiſts, as if humanity exiſted, not men, as if men compoſed of bones, fleſh, &c. were not ſubſtances, but modifications of this imaginary univerſal ſubſtance; nor is there any impiety greater than to pretend that, this imaginary ſubſtance, in which modifications are ſuppoſed inherent, which exclude each other, as heat and cold, the cruelty of the tyger, and the meekneſs of the lamb, is a God. The writer paſſes unnoticed his axioms, definitions, and pretended demonſtrations: againſt rank nonſenſe it is uſeleſs to reaſon.

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From the principles hitherto laid down, it is manifeſt that there exiſts a primary cauſe, almighty, independent, infinitely perfect, ſovereignly wiſe and intelligent, ſeeing from eternity all future events, whether reſulting from natural cauſes, or the determinations of free agents, permitting all ſecondary cauſes to act according to their nature, and diſpoſing all events according to the order of that general plan, which in his wiſdom he has formed; it is alſo manifeſt that this primary cauſe is one, ſimple and indiviſible, excluding multiplicity, and compoſition, whether phyſical or metaphyſical; that in this cauſe there are no inherent qualities, no attributes diſtinct from the divine nature, or from each other; that when we ſpeak of the mercy, the juſtice, the power, the wiſdom, &c. of the Divinity, it is the ſame divine nature, which we conſider under different points of view, the limitation of our underſtanding preventing us from taking in all theſe attributes at the ſame view.

That in the order of Beings, which compoſe the univerſe, there are many intelligent Beings ſubordinate to this firſt great cauſe, is manifeſt from the idea which we have of truth, of goodneſs, of juſtice, &c. which are merely intellectual, and fall under none of our ſenſes: truth for example has neither colour, taſte, ſmell nor ſound, nor can it come into contact with us: it conſiſts in the conformity of the attribute with its ſubject; of it we have a clear, a diſtinct idea, not from any one of our ſenſes, it is therefore purely intellectual, and ſhews that this intelligent faculty is inherent in us.

We are now to conſider whether this thinking principle within us, this intelligent Being, which reaſons and directs, and to which many, though not all the movements of our bodies, when well diſpoſed are ſubject, be material or ſomething diſtinct from matter.

If

If we believe the Materialiſt there is nothing in this univerſe but matter ; of courſe our reaſoning faculty is an attribute of matter ; our moſt elevated thoughts our moſt abſtract ideas are modifications of matter. A Philoſopher celebrated in certain ſchools, the once ſilent retreats of truth and ſcience ; but from which both have been baniſhed, at firſt by the iron hand of power, and in ſucceeding ages by prejudice, paſſion and penal ſtatutes, pretends, that matter, though compoſed of parts, may receive from almighty power the faculty of thinking ; he might as well pretend that, a circle without ceaſing to be a circle, might become a triangle ; the power of God extends to every thing which is poſſible, that is, to every thing the conſtituent parts, or attributes of which, do not exclude each other, ſuch chimeras are not the objects of power. If the principles of this Philoſopher be admitted, we may expect to hear a diſſertation on the nature and effects of fire, by a learned pot : for if one particle of matter be poſſeſſed of the faculty of thinking, no reaſon can be aſſigned why all others ſhould be excluded.

The operations of the mind eſſentially exclude the idea of matter. Of whatever nature the primary or component elements of matter be whether diviſible or indiviſible a queſtion as yet undetermined, matter is itſelf moſt certainly diviſible and compoſed of parts. The operations of the mind are indiviſible, and as the modifications of any ſubject are of the ſame nature with the ſubject itſelf, being nothing elſe but the ſubject modified, if the modifications or operations of the mind are indiviſible, of all neceſſity the mind muſt be ſo. We have an idea of truth, an idea of thought. Truth is not diviſible nor is thought half a truth, or half a thought is a mere chimera of which we can form no idea

Add to this that matter can never act on what is not immediately

immediately preſent, the mind reflects on the paſt, and foreſees future events, it reflects on itſelf and on its own operations, of this matter is totally incapable. The mind conceives that it is impoſſible the ſame thing ſhould be and not be at the ſame time, and this operation is abſolutely impoſſible to any ſubject compoſed of parts: if it be ſaid that the idea of what is, is in one part of the ſubject, and the idea of what is not, in another part of the ſubject, neither the one nor the other can pronounce the impoſſibility of their co-exiſtence; if it be thought that the idea of what is, and the idea of what is not, be in the ſame part of the ſubject, no reaſon can be aſſigned why that part ſhould poſſeſs theſe ideas excluding all others, moreover this part in which both ideas are ſuppoſed to exiſt, muſt be indiviſible or it would itſelf be compoſed of parts and the queſtion again recur; if it be aſſerted that theſe ideas are in every part of this compoſed ſubject, there will be as many judgments pronounced as parts in the ſubject, and after all there is but a ſimple and indiviſible Being which can pronounce the judgment.

This reaſoning which bears no reply, againſt which nothing can be offered, which does not carry abſurdity on the face of it, is applicable to every aſſertion whether affirmative or negative: in the affirmative the idea of the attribute is identified with that of the ſubject, and in the negative excluded from it, both theſe ideas muſt be in the ſame ſimple and indiviſible Being, or it would be impoſſible to pronounce the conſiſtency in the affirmative, or the inconſiſtency in the negative: thus for example ſuppoſing one man has a juſt idea of gold, no idea at all of ſilver, and another man an idea of ſilver, and no idea at all of gold, neither the one nor the other can pronounce this negative judgment, gold is not ſilver. The man who pronounces the judgment muſt have an idea of both the one and the other, he

he compares theſe ideas and finds them inconſiſtent, and then declares that the one is not the other. Again the mind is unconfined in its operations, limited neither by time, nor ſpace, and frequently ranges in the regions of imaginary ſpace; from the knowledge of one thing it proceeds to that of another, it forms abſtract ideas, conſiders Beings in a ſtate of mere poſſibility, reaſons on Beings confeſſedly immaterial, virtue, vice, truth, falſhood, calculation of numbers. Of all theſe operations matter is totally incapable: neither motion nor reſt, ſituation nor figure, nor any poſſible operation of matter, will give an idea of truth, of mercy or benevolence, nor place matter itſelf in the regions of imaginary ſpace or inſtitute a mathematical demonſtration.

But ſays the Materialiſt we do not know all the properties of matter, the faculty of thinking may be amongſt theſe latent properties.

It is true we do not know all the properties of matter, but we know that amongſt the unknown properties of matter there are none which exclude theſe we know, none inconſiſtent with theſe we know, and of the properties, which we know there are ſome which exclude the poſſibility of thought, that is extenſion and figure.

But ſays the celebrated Philoſopher ſo dear to the Materialiſt, our conceptions do not confine omnipotence, we are not to conclude that matter does not think becauſe we do not conceive it poſſible. True! our conceptions are not the meaſure of almighty power. Many things are poſſible of which we can form no idea at all, and many things do exiſt which appear repugnant to our ſenſes. We do not conclude that matter cannot think, becauſe we do not conceive it poſſible that matter ſhould poſſeſs the faculty of thinking; but we conclude that matter does not poſſeſs this faculty,

faculty, becauſe we clearly and eaſily conceive that it is impoſſible it ſhould, and we know that this impoſſibility is founded in the nature of things ; that a thinking pan or kettle is a ridiculous chimera, we know that the object of power is a Being, the component parts of which, or the conſtituent attributes, do not exclude each other, as a true falſhood, or a triangular circle, or a thinking pot.

Matter we conceive to be a ſolid ſubſtance compoſed of parts, the idea of vegetation or ſenſation is not included in the eſſential attributes of matter ; yet we find matter capable of vegetation and ſenſation, why not of thought? For this ſimple reaſon, that the eſſential attributes of matter exclude the poſſibility of thought, not of vegetation or ſenſation, which may be effected by motion, and a different diſpoſition and configuration of the component parts of the ſenſitive or vegetating ſubſtance ; both vegetation and ſenſation may be increaſed or diminiſhed, they may of courſe be modifications of a diviſible ſubject; the idea of truth, an affirmation or negation can neither be increaſed nor diminiſhed, it is eſſentially indiviſible and cannot exiſt but in an indiviſible ſubject.

As it is impoſſible for matter, any part or particle of matter to think or reaſon, and that, that thinking principle in man, which we call a ſoul, thinks, and reaſons, it neceſſarily follows that the ſoul is a ſpiritual ſubſtance. This truth founded on the moſt irreſiſtible reaſoning will appear evident to any man, who examines minutely its power of reflection, that is, when the ſoul forms a thought, and proceeds to examine it, and at times to examine its reflection on the thought, which it undertakes to examine, this power appears more wonderful when the ſoul reflects on herſelf, and examines her own operations, ſhe is then the ſubject of her own examination, an operation evidently ſpiritual,

ritual, of which matter can by no poſſibility be, or be conceived capable.

As to the union of this ſpiritual ſubſtance with the body compoſed of matter, we know it exiſts, the manner in which this ſurpriſing union is formed we do not know. That the ſoul acts on the body and the body on the ſoul is equally certain; the principles on which their mutual operations depend as aſſigned by different Philoſophers are ſome abſolutely falſe, and others uncertain, this argues a defect in our underſtanding, but does not affect a truth, which is known by inconteſtible experience.

But in fine ſays the Materialiſt the ſouls of brutes are capable of thought, and yet compoſed of matter. To this laſt refuge of the Materialiſt the writer replies if it be true, as he pretends, that, that principle of action, or rather that paſſive principle, which he calls a ſoul in the brute, be capable of thought, it is not compoſed of matter; or if it be compoſed of matter it is not capable of thought: whatever ſyſtem be aſſumed to account for the appearance of reaſon in brutes, it is metaphyſically true, that ſimple and indiviſible thought cannot be a modification of any ſubject compoſed of parts, if therefore this active or paſſive principle in the brute thinks it is not matter, and if it be matter it does not think.

Some Philoſophers celebrated in the ſchools pretend that brutes are mere automatons, and reduce all their operations to mechaniſm. Though the writer does not believe this ſyſtem true, the poſſibility is incontrovertible: ſuch machines being evidently within the reach of infinite power and wiſdom. In the principles of theſe Philoſophers the Materialiſt's objection vaniſhes. If the brutes be mere machines ſet in motion by ſprings, whatever appearance of reaſon be in their operations there is neither thought nor reflection, theſe Philoſo-

phers confirm their opinion by arguments drawn from the human body, which may be considered as an hydraulic machine, in which the powers of mechaniſm are wonderfully combined. In the human body there are innumerable latent ſprings, which are never called into action but by accident, it is by theſe dormant ſprings that, when a leg or an arm is taken off, a new communication between the arteries and veins is formed, for the conveyance of the blood; this is an effect of mechaniſm, totally independent on the will, why may not the brutes, ſay they, be compoſed of ſprings ſo contrived as by the impreſſion of external objects to produce all theſe operations, which we admire? To this may be added that the operations of all individuals of the ſame ſpecies are invariably the ſame. The young ſquirrel, that has not yet ſeen a winter, makes as ample a proviſion of nuts as the old. This ſameneſs in the operations of the young and the old ſhew the mechaniſm to be the ſame.

As to the inſtruction, of which ſome brutes are capable, it depends on the organization of the animal, which may be rendered more or leſs perfect by practice, not precept, of which the brute is incapable, if words be added, they are applied as ſound, which act on the animal's ſenſe of hearing, not as ſigns to convey ideas to its underſtanding, hence no general principles, no mathematical demonſtrations, no new inventions, in a word no intellectual operation is within the animal's reach, becauſe it poſſeſſes no intelligent faculty. The whole of the animal's knowledge is confined to its ſenſes, and the ſenſes are acted on by preſent objects, no concluſions drawn from principles, no retroſpect, no forethought.

Whether the animal be conſidered as an automaton, or poſſeſſed of ſome paſſive cognoſcent principle, it is manifeſt that a certain order, and appearance of reaſon muſt appear in its motions, becauſe it is under the im-

immediate

immediate direction of ſovereign reaſon, and intended to fulfil ſome end; thus an arrow though deſtitute of ſenſe and reaſon, paſſes with the utmoſt regularity, to the mark intended by the archer. The arrow, you will ſay, is ſubſervient to the eſtabliſhed laws of motion, does not change its own direction, not ſo the animal. True, but if you compare the limited power and reaſon of the archer, to omnipotence and omniſcience, and conceive that effects are always correſpondent to the power of action in their cauſes, you will find that the regularity in the flight of the arrow is more wonderful than the motions of the moſt cunning animal.

Man being compoſed of ſubſtances eſſentially different, and ſubſtantially united, the active and intelligent principle is, in many of its operations, dependent on the diſpoſition of the body, more particularly in the acquiſition of ideas, a great number of which are not attainable but through the medium of ſome one or other of the ſenſes, this dependence of the ſoul on the diſpoſition of the body furniſhes the Materialiſt another pretence. The ſoul, ſays he, is weak in the child, ſtrong in the man, it grows with the body, languiſhes and dies with it. The very dependence of the ſoul on the diſpoſition of the body, in many of its operations, from which the Materialiſt draws his objection ſolves the difficulty, becauſe it follows of neceſſity, that the operations of the ſoul, dependent on the diſpoſition of the body, muſt be more or leſs perfect according to that diſpoſition, that its knowledge muſt increaſe with its years, and that every derangement in the organization of the body, muſt produce a correſpondent derangement in the operations of the ſoul, but this mutual dependence does not ſhew that they are ſimilar ſubſtances, or that the active principle, in which there is no principle of diſſolution, may not exiſt after the union, by the deſtruction of the body, is diſſolved.

To

To conclude this article: there is not an operation of the mind, which does not argue its ſimplicity, which does not ſhew it to be an uncompoſed, indiviſible and active principle, it is not the eye that judges of colours, nor is it the ear that examines the nature of ſounds, all the ſenſes are inlets, and the ſame indiviſible Being ſees, hears, taſtes and ſmells. If this principle be ſuppoſed material how take in ſuch an immenſe quantity of objects at the ſame view? Where ſtow all the objects contained in the memory? How extend its reſearches in futurity? Where place the ideas of truth, of virtue, of vice, of diſhoneſty, which affect no ſenſe? How compare ideas and draw concluſions from fixed and eternal principles? Theſe operations of the human mind ſhew, in the ſtrongeſt light, the ignorance, abſurdity and impiety of the Materialiſt. It is a melancholy truth that ſuch monſters in human ſhape do exiſt amongſt us, and that the gratification of ſenſual appetites degrades a man ſo low as to deprive him of the light of reaſon.

As this intelligent Being, which we call a ſoul, is not ſelf-exiſtent, cannot receive an exiſtence from any Being equally imperfect and impotent, it argues the exiſtence of an omnipotent and eternal cauſe, on which it depends for its exiſtence and preſervation in that ſtate of exiſtence.

The ſoul of man, not being compoſed of jarring elements like the body, has no principle of diſſolution within it, it is therefore immortal of its own nature, and as it cannot give itſelf exiſtence, when in a ſtate of mere poſſibility, nor receive it from any other Being equally impotent, ſo, when placed in a ſtate of exiſtence, it cannot deprive itſelf of exiſtence, nor be deprived of it by any power inferior to that from which it holds exiſtence, it therefore cannot be deſtroyed but by annihilation.

That

That the ſoul muſt exiſt, when the union with the body is diſſolved, is evident from this, that in its moſt perfect operations it is independent on the body, that is, in reaſoning on univerſal principles, which though eternal and immutable cannot affect any one of its ſenſes, hence it follows that a ſeparation from the body only ſerves to perfect the ſoul, and as perfection and corruption are eſſentially oppoſite, what perfects cannot corrupt, or deſtroy, the ſoul therefore muſt exiſt when the union with the body is diſſolved, if not reduced to non-exiſtence by annihilation.

To pretend that the ſoul, immortal of its own nature, capable of greater perfections in its higheſt operations in a ſtate of ſeparation, than when united with the body, ſhould be deſtroyed by almighty power is raſh and extravagant. No reaſon can be aſſigned for this pretended annihilation, whilſt reaſons not ſimply plauſible but concluſive and incontrovertible ſhew the contrary.

In the firſt place the deſire of immortality is natural to man. It is univerſal, and has been ſo from the commencement; in vain does the Atheiſt, or the Materialiſt, pretend that this may be the effect of prejudice or education : he might as well pretend that the deſire of life or the means to ſupport it, is the effect of prejudice or education.

Prejudices are variable, ſo is education, and the opinions depending on them as variable as the principles, on which they depend ; the deſire of immortality is invariable, as univerſal as the deſire of meat and drink ; it is therefore founded in our nature, impreſſed on the ſoul by its author, conſequently it cannot be vain, if the author of nature, in whom veracity, wiſdom and power are infinite, be not ſuppoſed to ſport with his creatures, and amuſe himſelf with deceiving them, which ſurpaſſes abſurdity.

There

There are many who do not desire immortality. Perhaps there may be some impious, profligate, and unprincipled characters, who have nothing to expect but the punishment due to their crimes, to whom of course immortality is not desirable. There are men without noses, and some without eyes, does it follow that an eye or a nose is not natural to man? No! but that, through the interposition of some secondary causes, there are monsters in the physical world; in like manner if there be an Atheist, or a Materialist, who does not desire immortality, it only proves that there are monsters in the moral world, so absorbed in sensuality as to be deprived of the light of reason. The qualities natural to any species are not to be sought for in monsters, in which there must be either an excrescence, or a defect, but they are found in the more perfect individuals of the species. That this desire of immortality is deeply implanted in the minds of all good men was never denied even by the Atheist.

In the next place, the mind of man is unlimited in its desires, the more it knows, the more it desires to know, the greater its possessions the more it extends its views. One object attained is but an incentive to pursue another; it is therefore manifest that nothing short of infinitude can fill the capacity of the mind, and equally evident that infinitude is not attainable but by immortality, where truth is seen in its source, and fills the capacity of the understanding, and infinite excellence fixes the desires of the will, there being no other object which it can desire. This unlimited capacity, in the mind of man, shews that he has been intended for the possession of infinite excellence. Whence these terrors in the mind of the vicious or rather flagitious man? Whilst with impunity and horror he oppresses innocence, and increases his possessions with the spoils of the defenceless? And whence this secret satisfaction

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in the ſoul of the juſt man, when he relieves the diſtreſs of his moſt inveterate enemy, forgetting in the day of his diſtreſs that he is an enemy, and remembering that he cannot ceaſe to be his brother? Does not that ſenſe of rectitude implanted in the mind of man, point out an immortality, in which the juſt man expects the reward of his virtue, and the oppreſſor of innocence and weakneſs fears the puniſhment of his crimes? But virtue ſays the Materialiſt is its own reward, the ſenſe of having done a virtuous act rewards the action. It is true the ſenſe of virtue ſoothes in affliction, and pleaſes in proſperity; but it is from the proſpect of futurity, in which that reward, which is here denied, will be obtained. Virtue without a reward either here or hereafter, either in fact, or in hope, though good in itſelf, is not the ſource of any thing that is good. Vice rewarded here, and having nothing to fear hereafter, is preferable; hence it follows that the Atheiſt, and Materialiſt muſt be a flagitious man or a fool; that any appearance of virtue in ſuch a character is mere hypocriſy, a maſk aſſumed to impoſe on the unwary.

Now let us ſuppoſe that virtue from its innate beauty, and the ſatisfaction which attends virtuous actions may, without any proſpect of immortality, be an inducement to practice virtue in ſome inſtances, will it in all poſſible conjunctures? And ſuppoſing it a reward in ſome inſtances will it in all? What is the reward of the virtuous man whoſe innocence is oppreſſed by power, his reputation ruined by calumny, his family degraded and reduced to beggary, and he himſelf dragged as a criminal to a gibbet? In this life he can have no reward, becauſe he is deprived of life, in a future he can have none, if we believe the Materialiſt.

And what is the puniſhment of a mercileſs Tyrant, who

who facrifices thouſands to his amuſement? Who, inſenſible to the cries of defenceleſs women and children, buries them in the ruins of the cities which his ambition levels with the ground? An immortality is indiſpenſably neceſſary to reward the unmerited and unrewarded ſufferings of the former, and to puniſh the ferocious cruelty of the latter.

It is therefore manifeſt that the ſoul, immortal of its own nature, will not be annihilated by the power of its Creator. Add to this that a creature does not attain its ultimate end until its natural deſires are ſatisfied, the ſoul of man naturally, and invincibly, deſires happineſs, and a perpetual continuation of happineſs. The author of human nature does not withdraw that, which perfects nature, that without which it cannot attain its ultimate end. The poſſibility of annihilation is indiſputable: the power which creates can annihilate; nothing leſs than infinite power can do either. The diſtance between non-exiſtence and exiſtence whether infinite or not, is manifeſtly inſuperable to any limited power, but that it is inconſiſtent with the preſent order of things to exerciſe this power is manifeſt from the reaſons already aſſigned and will appear more clearly in the courſe of the work.

If it be aſked why the ſoul being independent on the body in its higheſt operations, and more capable of exerciſing its intellectual faculties in a ſtate of ſeparation, has been united to the body? The reply is ſimple and ſatisfactory. In all that depends on the abſolute and ſovereign will of the Creator he acts according to the dictates of his wiſdom. Conjecture aſſigns two plauſible reaſons. The firſt that the ſoul united to the body, in its ſtruggles with Beings of an inferior order, may be prepared for a more noble end as gold is tried in the fire; and through this appears the goodneſs of its author, in not only giving man a being, but alſo enabling

enabling him by his own efforts and the exercise of his faculties to attain a more exalted end, than that for which human nature seems intended. And the second, that the body itself elevated by its union with the soul, and purified by the practice of these virtues, of which it is the instrumental cause, may be placed in a more sublime situation, so that the soul may be to the body, what God is to the soul.

As it is impossible that a Being which is itself destitute of intelligence could give existence to intelligent Beings, from the existence of so many spirits in the intellectual world, that man must be ignorant indeed who does not see that there must be a primary cause sovereignly intelligent, a pure intellectual Being eminently possessed of all the powers and perfections, which it so bountifully, and abundantly bestows on its creatures. This primary cause is what in common language we call God, the first object of his will is his own infinite goodness: in this he sees all that is pleasing in his creatures, as it is natural for goodness to communicate itself to these he gave existence at the commencement of time, yet to shew his sovereign independence from eternity he was equally happy and glorious without them, their existence, or non existence, argues no change in him, who is eternal, and immutable, but in them, who are from the necessity of their being imperfect, subject to change. According to our limited mode of conception a sort of progress may be remarked in the love of God, his own excellence the first and principal object, the excellence and beauty of the universe as reduced to it, and the goodness of each particular object in reference to the whole, hence it is clear that what may appear to us a defect may be a perfection considered with respect to the whole, of which it is a part.

The excellence of God, to which nothing can be com-

pared, is a ſufficient reaſon for his loving himſelf; his goodneſs alſo is a ſufficient reaſon for creating the world; but a reaſon of mere convenience, not of neceſſity: for it is convenient and conſiſtent with ſovereign goodneſs to communicate itſelf in ſome meaſure, yet it is totally independent becauſe it is neither encreaſed nor diminiſhed by the goodneſs of its creatures.

Fear, hope, deſire, ſorrow, repentance, or any other paſſion, which argues a change in the ſubject, are inconſiſtent with the divine nature. Love is not; God loves himſelf and all his creatures, the beauty of the object attracts our will, the love of God is not attracted by the goodneſs of the object, it is efficient, not affective, it infuſes goodneſs and beauty in the object, and though the love of God to his creatures be one ſimple act identified with his eſſence, and incapable of encreaſe or diminution, from the greater or leſs excellence, which he communicates, it may be denominated greater, or leſs, in this ſenſe he does not love all his creatures equally. Some Philoſophers have taught that God from the neceſſity of his Being, is determined to create this world, and that a more, or leſs perfect, he could not create, this is perfectly impious, and hardly deſerves a refutation.

A chriſtian Philoſopher admitting the liberty of God to create, or not to create, pretends that of all poſſible ſyſtems, the preſent one is the moſt perfect, this opinion though not ſo impious as the former, is equally abſurd, as if the perfection of the whole, does not conſiſt in the perfection of it's component parts; and as if there be any one part of the viſible world, or even the intellectual world, at its ultimate point of perfection, ſo that omnipotence could not add one degree of perfection more to it.

The creation of a world more, or leſs, perfect, is an effect of choice, ſo that God is perfectly free to create or

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not to create, to create a world more or leſs perfect, God loves himſelf neceſſarily: it is impoſſible that ſovereign wiſdom ſhould not direct him to love ſovereign goodneſs, his creatures he loves becauſe he created them, not becauſe they are neceſſary to his happineſs, his exiſtence, his goodneſs, his ſanctity are independent on his creatures; on the contrary all his creatures depend on him. Moreover that liberty, which is enjoyed by many of his creatures, he muſt poſſeſs in a more eminent degree, elſe he could not communicate it. It may be ſaid that, the divine will, as the divine knowledge, being identified with the divine nature, God wills of neceſſity all that he wills, as he knows of neceſſity, all that he knows. The difference conſiſts in this, that the knowledge of objects, has a reference to the underſtanding, in which they are known, but the will has a reference to the objects as they are in themſelves.

Though the will of God be eternal, and immutable, and the efficient cauſe of all his creatures, it does not follow that his creatures ſhould exiſt from eternity, but that they ſhould exiſt in the ſucceſſive order, in which, by a free act of his will, he prediſpoſed them, nor does it follow that their exiſtence is neceſſary, but hypothetically, that is, in the ſuppoſition of God's determination to create them.

In God there is no paſſive indifference, nor is it neceſſary in us; an inſtant previous to action is indiſpenſably neceſſary to examine motives, and decide in conſequence. This inſtant is called the inſtant of election. God, whoſe knowledge is infinite, decides immediately, without any examination of motives, and his deciſion, or decree, is the exerciſe of the moſt perfect liberty, being an effect of active indifference; under no influence of any external cauſe, or preponderating motive capable of neceſſitating the will; his goodneſs

goodneſs may be conſidered as an inducement to create a world, on which his own happineſs, the only object capable of influencing his will, is totally independent.

From this reaſoning it appears that the immutability of God's decrees is perfectly conſiſtent with his liberty; for the exerciſe of this liberty requires no paſſive indifference, no previous examination of motives, no ſucceeding change, in a word nothing which argues the ſhadow of inconſiſtency. A diſcuſſion of any kind, an enquiry into the efficacy of means, a deciſion contrary to a former deciſion, are inconſiſtent with God's immutability; all theſe are excluded from the exerciſe of his liberty.

God, being the firſt great and univerſal cauſe, it is manifeſt that all ſecondary cauſes are dependent on him in their actions, of courſe that nothing can happen contrary to his will, hence it does not follow that the actions of men are not free, and contingent; it only argues the efficacy of God's will in conſtituting all ſecondary cauſes ſo that they may produce their effects according to their nature, yet all ſubordinate to his ſupreme will. Arſenic poiſons, and bread nouriſhes. Theſe are blind cauſes, their effects are invariably the ſame; they are determined by the Author of their being, whoſe ſovereign will conſtitutes the nature of all his creatures. The man thinks, ſpeaks and acts free from co-action, from without, or neceſſity from within, but not liberated from his dependence on the primary, and univerſal cauſe; without the concurrence of which no ſecondary cauſe can act; hence it follows that, notwithſtanding the exiſtence of moral evil in this world, the will of God is always fulfilled. It is true, the malice, or deformity of moral evil, is contrary to the will of God; but the permiſſion of the act in which this deformity, or, if you will, this non-conformity with the law is found, is not contrary to his will: as the nature

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of man is imperfect and defective, and that, in his wiſdom, he permits him to act according to his nature, and moreover as the reſult of this act, morally bad, is always directed by God to ſomething which is good, the permiſſion of the act is good, and conſiſtent with ſovereign goodneſs. From this permiſſion, or rather non-prevention of evil, it does not follow, that God is the cauſe of ſin either directly, or indirectly, or even by accident, as Philoſophers ſpeak. He is not the direct cauſe of ſin, becauſe he does not intend it, the proper uſe of liberty is intended by him, not the abuſe of it, not to ſay that a non-preventing cauſe, and more particularly a cauſe not obliged to prevent, was never thought an efficient cauſe of any act, either directly, or indirectly, or by accident, in a word the malice of any human act. conſiſting in its non-conformity with ſome law, is a defect not an effect, it argues a deficient cauſe not an efficient one.

A queſtion of great importance comes next under conſideration, that is, if man be a free agent. However ſtrange it may appear that, an opinion abſurd in itſelf, contradicting the ſenſe of mankind, degrading man from the rank, which he holds in the order of Beings, annihilating vice and virtue, rendering rewards and puniſhments ineffectual, ſubverſive of ſocial order and deſtructive of all ſociety, ſhould be adopted, and publicly avowed, by men ſtiling themſelves Philoſophers, and pretending to correct old errors, and diſpel that illuſion, which deceived the world from the commencement, it is not the leſs true : our modern Philoſophers have diſcovered that man is a well regulated piece of clock-work ; an animated machine ; that all his thoughts, his ideas, his ſenſations, his words, his actions, are neceſſarily connected, and ſucceed each other in order, from the neceſſity of his Being, as the links in a chain or the movements in a clock. *Riſum teneatis amici.* It

It is irkſome to reaſon againſt nonſenſe, yet the conſequences of this opinion, publicly avowed, and obtruded on a deluded people, in a thouſand different forms, oblige us to examine the ſophiſtry of its abettors, and the different fallacies which with unparaleled effrontery they call concluſive reaſons.

It muſt be obſerved in the firſt place that external force produces co-action, an internal impulſe irreſiſtible, is called neceſſity, impulſe however ſtrong, if not irreſiſtible is an inducement to act, but not inconſiſtent with liberty. Co-action and neceſſity are incompatible with freedom of action, or determination.

Beings exiſt from the neceſſity of their nature, which cannot be ſuppoſed non-exiſtent. Men's actions, in the opinion under conſideration, are of that character, each ſucceeding act being neceſſarily connected with the preceding, ſo that, it is as neceſſary that the highwayman ſhould murder the innocent, and unſuſpecting traveller, at that preciſe point of time, and in that very place, where the murder is committed, as that there ſhould be an eclipſe of the Moon, at that preciſe time, and in that part of the expanſe, where the Earth's place in the ecliptic, is in the right line drawn from the Moon's place in its path to the Sun.

Beings are ſaid to be contingent, when they may be ſuppoſed to exiſt, or not, thus if man be a free agent, the highwayman might, without abſurdity, be ſuppoſed to abſtain from the murder. This ſuppoſition is ſo very natural that, a Judge, upon conviction, will order the highwayman for execution, thinking not only that he might, but that he ought to have abſtained from the murder.

If man has any object in view, if he purſues an end, the object may be attainable by one, or different means, if the end be attainable but by one mean, that mean is called neceſſary, not ſimply, as if the mean exiſted

exiſted from the neceſſity of its being, but it is neceſſary to the attainment of the end in view, thus a veſſel is neceſſary to croſs the ocean, if a man intends to do ſo, and food is neceſſary to ſupport life.

If the ſame end may be attained by different means, they are called uſeful, not neceſſary. A carriage is uſeful in a long journey.

There is alſo a twofold indifference, paſſive, and active, this paſſive indifference is peculiar to all inanimate Beings, which are indifferent to reſt or motion in any direction, and will remain in any ſtate, in which they are placed until removed by ſome external agent.

Active indifference is the reſult of reaſon, the foundation of liberty in man, and in all intellectual Beings.

This active indifference, or power of ſelf-determination, enables a man to purſue an object, or its oppoſite, or ceaſe from the purſuit; to aſſume or reject any mean, or chooſe between two, or more, means equal, or unequal.

Does man poſſeſs this power of ſelf determination? This active indifference? Is he maſter of his actions? Are they the reſult of choice, or the effect of irreſiſtible impulſe? The world was in poſſeſſion of believing man a free agent. What an effort of generoſity in our modern Philoſophers to attempt to undeceive it? But if the deception be natural to man, a link in the chain of his ideas, our Philoſophers have to lament his fate, leave him to his deſtiny, and thank their ſtars that they themſelves are but animated machines, monkeys of a larger ſize; and that they have the candor to acknowledge it, whether the world believe them or not.

The writer believes the modern Philoſopher a factitious monkey: his babbling reſembles the chattering of his brother brute, his pretenſions to honor, honeſty, integrity

integrity or any other human virtue is mere grimace; the factitious brute however surpasses the natural, in folly, impudence and vanity. Of this picture he must not complain; he knows that every impulse is irresistible, the writer is, therefore, irresistibly impelled to class these hitherto non-descripts called modern Philosophers amongst factitious monkeys.

God being infinitely perfect, and perfectly free, either from co-action or irresistible impulse, may create man a free agent: it is not impossible to omnipotence, nor inconsistent with goodness, nor repugnant to man's dependence on his maker; for though his desires are boundless, he cannot attain the different objects, which he desires without the concurrence of his maker, so that notwithstanding his liberty of determination and action, he is always in a state of dependence.

The majesty, the wisdom, the mercy, and the justice of God, are manifest in that indifference of action which man enjoys, his majesty in being served by choice, his mercy in forgiving offences on condition of penance, his justice in rewarding virtue, when vice is practicable, and punishing vice whilst virtue is possible, and his wisdom, in establishing moral laws, the observance of which constitutes true happiness here, and conducts to endless happiness hereafter.

It is in vain to pretend that mere spontaneity is sufficient to constitute liberty. If so a wolf in pursuit of prey would be a free agent, and his liberty increase with his hunger, because it is certain that his pursuit of prey is eager and spontaneous in proportion to his hunger.

And it is yet more ridiculous to pretend that external co-action alone destroys liberty. Irresistible impulse from within is evidently more inconsistent with it. Why so? Because the will cannot be forced

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by any external power: the body may be laid under any reſtraint but not the mind, whereas internal impulſe irreſiſtible reſtrains the mind, deprives her of the power of accepting or rejecting the object propoſed to the will, or of purſuing another at that time; hence appears the indiſpenſable neceſſity of active indifference in a free agent, that is, that the agent be not determined by any cauſe, either external, or internal, but determines itſelf according to election. This neceſſity of election argues the neceſſity of ſome previous knowledge of the object: the mind can neither deſire nor hate an object, of which it has no idea at all, the purſuit of ſuch an object, muſt be the effect of blind impetuoſity, or impulſe, not of choice.

Hence abſolute neceſſity deſtroys liberty of action, becauſe it is totally inconſiſtent with active indifference, as it determines the mind on purſuit of the object; with previous knowledge as it is implanted in our nature; and with choice or election, it leaves room for none.

Hypothetical neceſſity is reconcileable with free agency, thus a veſſel is neceſſary for me to croſs the Atlantic, but this neceſſity ſuppoſes my determination to croſs it, and a previous knowledge, diſcuſſion, and choice of the motives, which induced me to make the voyage.

The exerciſe of reaſon is abſolutely neceſſary to liberty: it is reaſon which directs the mind in the choice of motives, in the choice of means to attain an end, or in the choice of objects, which to purſue, or which to avoid; without reaſon there is no election, there is no liberty, nothing but blind inſtinct or natural and irreſiſtible impulſe. Hence fools and children are not accountable for their actions. Though the will be the ſubject of liberty, reaſon is the cauſe of it. Hence it follows that any thing not ſubject to the judgment of

reaſon, cannot be the object of liberty, as the deſire of happineſs in general, it is implanted in the mind of man, from this deſire of happineſs in general we purſue particular objects, which we think conducive to happineſs, in the choice of theſe objects, and in the choice of means to attain theſe objects, conſiſts the exerciſe of our liberty. The purſuit or averſion of any object pre-ſuppoſes a knowledge of the object, a diſcuſſion of motives, an election and conſequent determination, all which are neceſſary to conſtitute a free act of the will.

Motives however ſtrong are but inducements to act: they give no irreſiſtible impulſe; the mind from its innate activity is free to reject or re-conſider them; but if the mind ultimately determines to act in ſuch or ſuch a manner, in conſequence of ſuch or ſuch a motive, its active indifference with reſpect to that particular act of the will, no longer ſubſiſts, becauſe it has been exerciſed, the act itſelf is no longer indifferent to exiſt or not exiſt, becauſe it in fact exiſts; yet it is manifeſtly a free act, becauſe it is the effect of free and active determination, upon conſideration of motives, and choice, hence Philoſophers ſay that a man neceſſarily acts in conſequence of his laſt practical judgment, which is true, but it is a neceſſity induced by the exerciſe of his liberty, as it is impoſſible that he ſhould act and not act at the ſame time.

The aſſent of the underſtanding to certain truths, which are irreſiſtible, is not repugnant to liberty: it is true the mind cannot refuſe its aſſent to truths, which are evident on the expoſition; but the mind is under no neceſſity of contemplating theſe truths, the neceſſity of believing them, is therefore a conſequent neceſſity, induced by an act of choice, in which the exerciſe of liberty conſiſts.

That the will of man is unreſtrained in its determinations

tions, either by external force, or internal impulſe, is the univerſal ſenſe of mankind if you except a few vain men, who to acquire a name, affect to believe the contrary of what their actions ſhew to be truth; the very jargon of theſe ſcribblers is the effect of liberty, and its greateſt abuſe.

If man be not maſter of his actions to what end have laws been eſtabliſhed in all countries and at all times? To what end propoſe rewards or puniſhments? Why praiſe the fortitude of the one, or deſpiſe the daſtardly cowardice of the other? Why erect a ſtatue to the deliverer of his country, or a gibbet for the betrayer? It is evident as the Sun at mid-day that no man deſerves reward, or puniſhment, for what he cannot poſſibly avoid.

To pretend that men's actions are under the influence of fate is a ridiculous abſurdity: fate is an empty ſound, it conveys no idea to the mind, to aſſign an imaginary Being, which has no exiſtence, as the director of man's will, ſurpaſſes folly. That the will of man is ſubject to the influence of the Stars is equally abſurd. Are the Stars intelligent? Do they direct the mind of man according to fixed or variable laws? In reaſoning on moral principles, on mathematical truths, on univerſal principles, on virtue, vice, &c. are we to conſult the relative poſitions of the Planets?

But ſays the Aſtrologer the influence of the Moon is manifeſt in the caſe of lunatics. Yes and in many other caſes too: its influence is great on all ſublunary bodies. It is not difficult to aſſign the reaſon. The attractive force of the Moon encreaſing, or decreaſing, in a certain proportion, as its diſtance from the Earth encreaſes or decreaſes, augments or diminiſhes the preſſure of the atmoſphere on the human body, as on all other ſublunary bodies, and thereby encreaſes or diminiſhes that de-

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rangement in the lunatic's frame, which is the cauſe of his lunacy, the effects of the Moon and of all other Planets on the atmoſphere and on the waters are ſubject to mathematical calculations. No doubt our pretended Philoſophers will begin to calculate the operations of the mind proportioned to theſe effects: the data are ſufficient for men accuſtomed to ſwallow all ſorts of abſurdity, or, if you will, worthy the attention of theſe men who are come to undeceive the human race, pardon the expreſſion, the *Baboon race*. Unfortunately certain events ſhew that the influence of the Planets is not invariable on the human mind: at the ſame inſtant a drunkard ſteps into the tavern, and a ſober man paſſes it unnoticed, the influence was not the ſame on both. No matter. That will only encreaſe the difficulty of calculation, and the glory of the modern Philoſopher will ſtill be greater.

The mind of man is conſcious of its liberty, the man who denies it, believes this truth as the writer does: he is convinced that when he turns his thoughts on any object, he may remove the object from his mind, and make ſome other a ſubject of conſideration, or continue to contemplate the former, when he walks, he knows he may ſit at his will, or continue to walk, and if he continues to walk, it is an effect of choice, or if he ſits, it is equally an effect of choice. It is true he cannot walk and ſit at the ſame time. Liberty does not require impoſſibilities, but it is enough that he walks or ſits at his option, to convince him that his determinations are free from reſtraint. It is in vain to reaſon with a man who does not admit a truth, of which he is conſcious.

It is true certain thoughts occur, for which we cannot account, and our ideas at times ſucceed each other without any ſort of connection. Images are propoſed to our imagination which we bear with reluctance, and from

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from which we find it difficult to disengage our mind; but all this so far from being inconsistent with liberty shews that there is within us a power of action and determination uncontrouled. Why so? Because the virtuous man rejects these objects proposed to his imagination, with horror, regardless of the strong impressions made on animal nature. Whilst the intemperate sensualist pursues them with an eagerness, which approaches fury. The power therefore of rejecting or desiring such objects is free from restraint; this not only proves the liberty of man, but also the total independence of the soul on the body in its operations. For if the strongest impressions on the sensual appetite be not irresistible, it is manifest that the soul is mistress of her will and independent on the body.

Finally the object of desire is either real, or apparent good, and the object of aversion, is either real, or apparent evil, there is no object inferior to sovereign happiness, which may not excite desire, or aversion, which the will may not pursue, or relinquish, because there is none in which there is not some appearance of good, and some appearance of evil, no particular object therefore can irresistibly attract the will.

The man, who dreams, says the Materialist, is conscious of his liberty, why not the man who wakes? May not his life be a perpetual dream? Such nonsense shews the Materialist to be a dreamer. If it be true, as some Physicians pretend, that dreams are caused by a certain commotion in the brain from the irregular flowing of the animal spirits, and presenting ideas to the mind as if a real impression were made on the organs of sense, it is easy to conceive that the mind enjoys no liberty in its dreams, because there is no comparison of ideas, no previous knowledge of objects, no examination of motives, consequently no choice, no exercise of liberty. To pretend that man in his sober senses and active employments

employments is in the ſame ſtate as if he dreamed is an abſurdity beneath notice.

Nothing exiſts without a ſufficient reaſon, no effect without a cauſe, true, but the cauſe may be determined to act by ſome external power, as a ſtone gravitates according to the laws of motion, or the cauſe from innate activity determines itſelf, as a man walks, or ſits, at his option, any inducement is a ſufficient reaſon for either.

All ſecondary cauſes are dependent on the primary cauſe in their operations. That is admitted; but the primary cauſe directs ſecondary cauſes according to their nature, becauſe God preſerves and does not corrupt the nature of his creatures, hence as he has created man intelligent, an active and free agent, in the direction of his operations, he does not deprive him of that liberty of action, which is a privilege of human nature, the very characteriſtic which diſtinguiſhes him from the brute.

As man is not ſelf-exiſtent, he muſt depend on the ſame great cauſe which gave him an exiſtence for a continuation of that exiſtence. At the firſt inſtant of exiſtence he may be conſidered as merely paſſive, but nothing prevents him from exerciſing that activity, which he received with exiſtence in all ſucceeding inſtants: for whether his preſervation be conſidered as a continuation of the act of creation, or rather a manutention in received exiſtence, or ſimply a permiſſion to continue, it is certain, that he is not taken a ſecond time from a ſtate of non-exiſtence, and that being in exiſtence, he may exerciſe the natural powers which he poſſeſſes.

In children, and ſome ſuperannuated perſons reaſon appears weak, hence the Materialiſt imagines that, the operations of the ſoul are the effects of motion, with which active indifference is irreconcileable.

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It is true the ſenſes are the inlets of moſt ſenſations, and many ideas, and any derangement in the organs of ſenſe muſt affect the ſoul in many of her operations, whilſt united with the body. In the child the organs are not ſufficiently formed to uſe them with efficacy, and in extreme old age they are decayed. Liberty is an inherent power of the ſoul, but as the exerciſe of this power requires a previous knowledge of objects, if through any defect in the organs, theſe objects are not repreſented, the exerciſe of the power muſt be ſuſpended, as in children or perſons inſane through age or infirmity.

A Philoſopher of note unable to explain the motions of the body ſubſervient to the will, or the impreſſions of the ſenſes on the mind, pretends that the ſoul is but the occaſional cauſe, and God the ſole mover. Thus for example the ſoul deſires to move the finger, and God gives it motion, in like manner an external object makes ſome impreſſion on the organs of ſenſe, and God produces in the ſoul a correſpondent ſenſation, if he had confined himſelf to ſay that the operations of the one or the other, were conſequences of the phyſical and perſonal union of the ſoul with the body, according to laws eſtabliſhed by the Creator, there would be nothing reprehenſible in his opinion. How this union is formed we do not know, it is not the only part of God's work which our underſtanding cannot reach, that it ſubſiſts we know, and that it may be diſſolved we will know.

Another Philoſopher unreſtrained in his opinions by divine authority, pretends that the ſoul and body both act independent; that a ſeries of movements ſucceed in the body correſpondent to a ſeries of ideas in the ſoul; to juſtify ſome appearance of free agency in the ſoul, of which we are all conſcious, he pretends that this correſpondence is pre-eſtabliſhed between the perceptions

ceptions of the mind, not its volitions; and the movements of the body, whereas the movements of the body in reality correſpond to the volitions and not the perceptions: for whatever ideas or images are repreſented to the mind, it is the volition, or order of the will which gives motion to the hand. To paſs in ſilence the abſurdity of ſuppoſing that the ſoul and body are ſo conſtituted, that, if the ſoul were in China and the body in Peru, the ſame perceptions would ſucceed in the one, and movements in the other, as in their preſent union.

In vain the Philoſopher has recourſe to the preſcience of God to foreſee the volitions of the ſoul, and to his omnipotence to form a correſpondent automaton, it is well known that both is poſſible, and equally well known that in his ſyſtem the ſoul in its volitions is confined to the motions pre-eſtabliſhed in the body, and no others, which is deſtructive of its liberty. It is quite otherwiſe with the preſcience of God: for though the ſoul will not form any other volition, but that which is foreſeen, the poſſibility, and power of forming any other ſubſiſts, and is totally unreſtrained.

However incorrect the opinions of theſe Philoſophers, they unanimouſly admit the liberty of man, and endeavor to reconcile it with their principles, they are not to be numbered with Atheiſts or Materialiſts.

The power of God comes next under conſideration; it is infinite being unreſtrained by any external cauſe, God being totally independent, nor can it be circumſcribed by God himſelf, as he has not given himſelf exiſtence, nor perfection, it is identified with his eſſence, becauſe there is nothing in God which is not, it is therefore the principle, not of action, which is not diſtinguiſhed from power in God, but of effects, and theſe effects not being infinite, ſhew the liberty of God in all his works, for any effect from the neceſſity of

nature,

nature, is correſpondent to the power of the agent; thus a ſtone falls with all its weight, a man begets another and no other Being.

Within the ſphere of omnipotence are all theſe Beings which do not involve a contradiction, that is, whoſe conſtituent parts or attributes are not incompatible. Beings compoſed of attributes which exclude each other can have no exiſtence, they are not the objects of power.

The immenſity, or omnipreſcence, of God argues no ſpiritual extenſion in him, for where there is extenſion, there muſt be a plurality of parts, which is repugnant to the perfect ſimplicity of the Divine Nature. God is in all things and places, by his power: all things are ſubject to it; by his preſence all things are open to his view; and by his eſſence: from him all created Beings have an exiſtence. God is preſent to all things, not as a part of their eſſence, nor as an accident, but as the agent is preſent to the ſubject, on which it acts, and as all things have from him an exiſtence, and the continuation of that exiſtence than which nothing is more intimate to any Being, hence it follows that God is intimately preſent to all Beings whilſt they do exiſt. "In him we live, we move, and are."

The arguments adduced in favor of the opinion that, the preſent world is of all poſſible ſyſtems the moſt perfect, hardly deſerve refutation, as it is manifeſtly injurious to the power, the wiſdom and the goodneſs of God, and totally deſtructive of the divine liberty.

It is admitted by the partizans of this abſurd opinion, that the power of God is not exhauſted by the production of this preſent world, or the perfection of its component parts. Why confine the wiſdom of God to this order in preference to all others? Does God not know the extent of his power? Or to ſpeak more correctly does he not know that his power is infinite, that no

creature which he has produced, is at the ultimate point of perfection, to which his infinite power could not add one degree of perfection more? Why pretend that his wisdom could not prefer a system, in which all the component parts, would receive an additional degree of accidental perfection? Does not the perfections of the whole result from the relative perfections of all its parts? In a word if his power, his wisdom and his goodness be confined to the present system, neither the one nor the other is infinite, for the present system has its limits; and the man who limits the power or wisdom of God is not far remote from an Atheist.

We come next to examine these attributes of the Divinity, which are called relative by Philosophers, because they import, or rather indicate, a sort of relation to its creatures; the first of these is the creation, or that act of the divine will, which gives existence, this act of omnipotence is in every sense impossible, and incommunicable to any created Being: in the order of agents and actions, the most excellent action is confined to the most excellent agent, that action, which gives existence is of all others the most excellent, because it is the first, it is therefore confined to the first, and most universal cause, the Divinity.

Nor can any creature be assumed as an instrumental cause, for all instruments dispose by that action, which is proper to them, the subject matter, for the action of the principal cause: in the creation of any Being there is no pre-existent matter, no subject, which the instrument can dispose, and though all creatures are limited, yet the production of any one of them requires unlimited power, a power incommunicable to any creature.

Though we cannot represent to our imagination a Being transferred from a state of mere possibility to a state of existence; yet as our reason is convinced that

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all the Beings, which now exiſt in this viſible world, are ſubject to change, and continually changing, we are forced to conclude that they are not ſelf-exiſtent, that they muſt therefore have been educed by a cauſe ſelf-exiſtent, and all-powerful, from a ſtate of non-exiſtence. We are alſo forced to conclude that, God in the formation of the world did not diſpoſe any pre-exiſtent matter, which he himſelf had not created, for as all matter is manifeſtly created, if there had been any pre-exiſtent matter not created by God, it muſt have been by ſome other Being of ſuperior power, that power which furniſhes the matter is evidently ſuperior to that which diſpoſes it; to admit a power ſuperior to omnipotence is ridiculous.

The laws of motion, to which all bodies are ſubject, and which they invariably obſerve, ſhew a ſuperintendant power, which is implicitly obeyed, in other words a Providence, which conducts this viſible world. From certain diſorders which happen, and events, which ſeem inconſiſtent with our notions of a ſuperintending power, ſome Philoſophers pretend to conclude that Providence does not extend to human actions, though theſe very diſorders, and events, from which they pretend to draw the concluſion, are concluſive evidence of the contrary: for order is an effect of wiſdom and power, and if order be not eſtabliſhed, there can be no diſorder. To paſs unnnoticed the extravagance of ſuppoſing a God all-bountiful, all-wiſe and all-powerful, neglecting that part of his works, from which he has a right to expect his tribute of gratitude, and external glory, whilſt a man who plants an orchard, or even a tree, without any object in view and neglects it muſt be thought an idiot.

The cauſes of Providence extend to the moſt minute parts of the creation, for the beauty and order of the whole reſults from the beauty and order of all its parts.

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To obviate a difficulty, which is drawn from the proſperity of the wicked, and adverſity of the juſt, from the oppreſſion of innocence and the haughty inſolence of power, it is ſufficient to remark that if all crimes were immediately puniſhed there would be no room for repentance, none for the exerciſe of clemency and mercy, the deſtruction of a great majority of the human ſpecies would be inſtantaneous. It is true great crimes, are ſometimes puniſhed immediately to terrify others, and if virtue does not immediately obtain its reward, it will in due time, patience and perſeverance enhance the merit of all other virtues.

God in his providence directs all his creatutes to their ultimate end immediately, and each creature to its immediate end, but in the execution of this direction the intervention of ſecondary cauſes is admiſſible, each acting according to its nature, yet ſo as not to diſturb or derange the plan propoſed by God as *ſupreme proviſor*, and though all his creatures are immediately ſubject to God's providence, intelligent Beings are more particularly the objects of his care, they are the only ſpectators of his works, the only creatures capable of knowing and loving him, and as he is himſelf the laſt end of all his creatures they alone can attain this end, it is therefore manifeſt that they are the firſt objects of his care; hence it follows that intelligent Beings are under the direction of Providence, not only for the good of the ſpecies, but alſo for the good of the individual, whereas of all other creatures the individuals are directed to the good of the ſpecies. Hence alſo it appears that the number of individuals of any ſpecies, except the human, though known to God as nothing is unknown to him, is not immediately intended for the individuals but for the ſupport and propagation of the ſpecies.

As God, in the production of many effects, admits the

the intervention of ſecondary cauſes acting according to their nature, order requires that inferior Beings ſhould be ſubject to the direction of ſuperior, non-intelligent to intellectual, and as amongſt intellectual Beings ſome are ſuperior to others, order requires that the more noble ſhould direct ; yet whatever effects are produced by ſecondary cauſes may at times be produced by God immediately, as at the creation all effects were produced by the Divine Power without the intervention of any ſecondary cauſe ; and the powers of all cauſes are from him, nor is the production of any effect without the intervention of a ſecondary cauſe, a diſturbance of the eſtabliſhed order : becauſe even that is ſubject to order, and within the ſphere of his providence. Moreover the order eſtabliſhed in the production of effects by ſecondary cauſes is not abſolutely invariable, but ſubject to interruptions through the interference of other cauſes, as when a child is born without hands or with ſix fingers, if therefore the eſtabliſhed order may be interrupted by the interference of ſecondary cauſes, it may by the primary cauſe, this ſometimes happens for the manifeſtation of God's glory ; and to ſhew that the order, which now ſubſiſts was an effect of choice, not of neceſſity. Effects produced by the Divine Power without the intervention of ſecondary cauſes, though not in the common courſe of nature, are not contrary to nature : for all ſecondary cauſes are but the inſtruments of Divine Power, and the nature of all Beings is totally dependent on the Divine Will. The univerſe therefore, and all the Beings which compoſe it, is a piece of mechaniſm, and God the artiſt, however well finiſhed the piece may appear, the artiſt may yet make changes according to his will. A prodigy therefore though not in the common courſe of nature, as known to us, is perfectly natural, becauſe it is according to the diſ-

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poſition of the Divine Will which determines the nature of all things.

Though God in his providence be infallible, and that will certainly happen which he has ordered, all cauſes whatſoever being within the ſphere of his providence, yet the infallibility of his providence impoſes no neceſſity on the determinations of man's will, becauſe his providence infinitely perfect diſpoſes not only all events, but alſo the manner in which theſe events will happen; neceſſarily, if the cauſes be under any natural neceſſity, as an eclipſe of the Moon upon paſſing through the ſhadow of the Earth, or contingently, when the cauſes producing ſuch an effect are free agents, as the late French Revolution. In this appears the boundleſs power, and infinite wiſdom of God, that permitting a thouſand free and concurring cauſes to act according to their nature, and impoſing no neceſſity upon any one of them, he yet directs them all ſo as to produce infallibly that event, which is pre-diſpoſed in the order of his providence.

Though it may appear difficult to reconcile the infallibility of Providence with the free agency of man, yet, if it be conſidered, that there is no created object of man's purſuits, which has not its beauties and deformities, the difficulty will vaniſh. May not the deformities of the object be ſtrongly impreſſed on the mind and deter from the purſuit? Or may not the beauties of the object be ſo expoſed as infallibly to attract the notice? Do we not every day ſee the effects of human perſuaſion? Yet what man in his reaſon pretends that an Orator, who obtains his ſuit impoſes any neceſſity on the minds of an audience? But this you will ſay would make the infallibility of God's providence dependent on the will of man. No. But on its own infinite perfection; for it does not depend on the mind of man to ſee all the beauties or deformities of

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the object, if they be not impreſſed on it by that all powerful agent, who directs the wills of all men without neceſſity, or coercion to his own views. "*Pertingens* "*a fine uſque in finem fortiter and ſuaviter omnia diſponens.*"

Hence it appears manifeſtly inconſiſtent with God's providence that man's liberty ſhould be deſtroyed, or even impeded, as the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of Providence is to preſerve, and not to corrupt the nature of his creatures; hence it appears alſo that the permiſſion of moral evil, or phyſical corruption is conſiſtent with Providence, becauſe in the execution of its decrees it makes uſe of ſecondary cauſes acting according to their nature; all free agents may uſe, or abuſe, their natural liberty; in the abuſe conſiſts moral evil. All material cauſes being compoſed of parts, are from their nature ſubject to diſſolution, and corruption, to ſay all in a word, God is the author of all that is good; evil he neither produces, ſuggeſts nor countenances; but from evil he always draws good and directs the reſult to the accompliſhment of his own views.

The motion of the Heavenly Bodies, and the communication of motion from one ſublunary body to another, is ſuch concluſive evidence of the inceſſant vigilance of Providence, and of the attention of a God, all-wiſe, and powerful to the preſervation of his creatures, that even to doubt it, argues the moſt ſtupid ignorance or obſtinate perverſeneſs.

The Planets, inert matter, move in their orbits with the utmoſt regularity; if any body in motion ſtrikes another either at reſt or in motion, the body which ſtrikes communicates a part of its motion to the other, proportioned to its maſs with mathematical preciſion. It therefore implicitly obeys the power which directs it.

Does this inviſible power which preſerves order in the univerſe, and by inceſſant action prevents confuſion, preſerve its creatures alſo in a ſtate of exiſtence, ſo that

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if the upholding hand of infinite power be ſuppoſed withdrawn, but for an inſtant, the univerſe would ceaſe to exiſt? Yes, the ſame power which gives exiſtence, continues to preſerve it, and that Being which is originially from nothing, without a continuation of that action which gave it exiſtence would return to its primitive ſtate. It is true a ſpiritual ſubſtance has no internal principle of diſſolution; but it is equally true that as it did not give itſelf exiſtence, it cannot continue in its exiſtence, becauſe it cannot without abſurdity be ſuppoſed independent at any inſtant of its duration, it is therefore as dependent on the creating power for the continuation as for the commencement of exiſtence.

It is manifeſt that the ſame power, which creates, can annihilate, and as the goodneſs and wiſdom of God is totally independent on his creatures, he may, at his will, either continue, or ceaſe to continue them in exiſtence; yet as the power, the goodneſs and wiſdom of God appears more evidently from the preſervation, than from the deſtruction of his creatures it is certain that he will not annihilate any one of theſe Beings, to which he has given an exiſtence.

His dominion over all his creatures is abſolute, and inalienable; from him they have not only that they exiſt, but that they do not ceaſe to exiſt. All irrational creatures implicitly obey, and purſue that path, which in his wiſdom he has traced for them, intelligent Beings abuſing that liberty of determination, and action, which diſtinguiſhes them from the irrational part of the creation, ſeem to diſobey, yet even theſe are reduced to the moſt perfect obedience: in all his precepts there is an alternative, either expreſſed or implied, obedience to the precept is expected from the intelligent creature, if refuſed the alternative depending on the abſolute will of the Creator will moſt certainly take effect.

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We have now taken a curſory view of the perfections of God as known to us by the light of reaſon, and ſhewn the abſolute dependence of all his creatures on his bounty, not only for their exiſtence, but for the continuation of their exiſtence. Of his creatures ſome are inanimate, ſome, though animated, irrational, theſe have their places determined, their paths traced, from which, they neither do, nor can depart, being incapable of choice and blindly obedient to impulſe, intelligent creatures bleſſed with the light of reaſon are alone capable of acknowledging the obligation, and paying a voluntary homage to their Creator, to them laws are given; rewards promiſed to obedience, and diſobedience threatened with puniſhment. Amongſt them the terms *virtue* and *vice* are heard and underſtood, to feed the hungry was thought a virtuous act by the ſimplicity of our anceſtors, and to oppreſs innocence by power, or ruin reputation by calumny, was conſidered not ſimply a vicious act but an atrocious crime. Thanks to the new fangled philoſophy of modern ſcribblers theſe notions are grown obſolete: theſe pretended teachers of mankind gravely tell us that there is no eſſential difference between virtue and vice. That is in other terms. Reaſon qualifies the murder of an innocent, and loving parent, *a virtuous act*, as laudable as the defence of innocence againſt oppreſſion. Againſt abſurd extravaganee, or ſhameleſs impudence all reaſoning is vain. And the man who believes, or pretends to believe ſuch diſguſting nonſenſe is incapable of liſtening to reaſon.

To act according to the dictates of unprejudiced reaſon is perfectly conſiſtent with human nature: for, ſince man is a rational creature, to act according to the dictates of reaſon is anſwering the end of his creation, it is therefore conſiſtent with his nature; if, on the contrary, his actions be inconſiſtent with the dic-

tates of reaſon, he does not anſwer the end of his creation, he ſtrays from the path, which has been traced, and ſtands accountable to the Author of his Being for the perverſion and abuſe of the moſt excellent of his gifts, hence it muſt be inferred that virtue is conſonant to the nature of man, and vice repugnant to it, yet as all moral virtues are habits conſonant to reaſon acquired by a repetition of virtuous acts, virtue is not implanted in the nature of man, though the capacity of being virtuous is: this reaſoning applies with equal force to vice. Man is not born vicious, but the capacity of acquiring vicious habits is manifeſtly implanted in that ſenſuality, to which from its union with the body, the ſoul of man is naturally addicted.

Is man obliged to worſhip his God in ſpirit and truth? Is he indiſpenſably obliged to pay him internal reverence and external homage? The anſwer to this queſtion ſeems extremely ſimple, ſomething is due from man to that God, from whom he has received an exiſtence, and all that is neceſſary to ſupport that exiſtence, and on whoſe almighty power he depends for a continuation of that exiſtence. This truth is founded on the firſt principles of common ſenſe. The leaſt poſſible payment is an acknowledgment of the debt: man is therefore obliged to acknowledge him for his Creator, his conſervator, and his benefactor. And as God is good, and the fountain of all goodneſs, he is the great object of man's love, which can have no other object but either real or apparent good, to prefer any limited object to infinite goodneſs is inconſiſtent with reaſon, a love of preference is therefore indiſpenſably neceſſary, and, as he is truth itſelf, incapable of deception, or deceit, if he propoſes any truth, though it may tranſcend the ſphere of our limited underſtanding, we are ſtrictly obliged to believe it; but we are alſo obliged to enquire if, what is propoſed as truth, be revealed by

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him, we thus confine our reaſon to its proper object: for to enquire, if what is revealed by God, be truth, or not, ſurpaſſes impudence. Hence it appears that faith is an eſſential part of that homage which man owes his God.

That man, if his actions be conſiſtent with the dictates of right reaſon, has a right to expect a reward from ſovereign power and infinite goodneſs, is indiſputable; and if his actions be inconſiſtent with reaſon, that he may juſtly fear chaſtiſement, from ſupreme juſtice is equally certain.

Beſides the internal reſpect, reverence and love which a man owes his God, he is obliged to pay external homage: becauſe man is compoſed of ſoul and body, the homage which he pays muſt be correſpondent to the nature of his Being, that is, it muſt be compoſed of the internal act of reverence within the ſoul, and the external act of the body, which ſignifies it, that it may not be ſimply the homage of the ſoul, nor ſimply of the body, but the homage of the man. To confine the divine worſhip merely to the internal act is to miſtake the nature of man, and alſo the nature of the homage, which he owes to his Creator as a man; becauſe God is a Spirit he muſt be adored in ſpirit, and becauſe he is truth itſelf, and ſanctity, no mixture of falſhood is admiſſible, nothing inconſiſtent with purity, nothing unworthy his majeſty: the external homage muſt be expreſſive and ſignificative of that internal reſpect, and reverence, which a man has for his God, as a Being infinitely perfect, pure and holy, it muſt, therefore, exclude every thing which is inconſiſtent with truth and ſanctity. Hence appears not only the abſurdity and extravagance, but the abominable impiety of the Heathen rites, of the Mahometan, and of ſeveral ſects, who perverted the Chriſtian worſhip by rites correſpondent to theſe opinions,

opinions, which flattered their pride or ſenſuality.

That there are certain human actions laudable in their own nature, and others reprehenſible, independently on all poſitive laws, was never denied but by the moſt corrupt and impious amongſt the Heathens. From theſe our modern Philoſophers have borrowed that nonſenſical jargon, which they call demonſtration, of an opinion the moſt extravagant that ever inſulted the public ear, to wit, that vice and virtue, right and wrong, are totally dependent on human laws; that no action conſidered in itſelf previous to ſome human law which forbids it, is wrong.

Nor is any action right if not ordered. What! theſe actions which tend to the public good, and public ſafety, would not be right if a malicious Tyrant forbid them! and actions evidently deſtructive of ſociety would be right if ordered by him! it is not in the power of any Legiſlature to make that which is juſt and laudable in itſelf, and advantageous to the public, diſadvantageous to it, or to make that which is ſubverſive of ſociety, uſeful to it. A law to order all mothers' to deſtroy their offſpring would ſhew the malice of the Legiſlator; but would not make the act lawful, and if any man be ſo loſt to ſhame or ſo impudently obſtinate as to deny this truth, it is uſeleſs to reaſon with him.

As the nature of all the different ſpecies, which form the univerſe is determined, the actions conſiſtent with the nature of each ſpecies, are alſo determined, thus it is natural for a horſe to carry burthens, and a bird to fly. A flying horſe or a bird carrying burthens is unnatural. Hence ſince man is poſſeſſed of reaſon, it is natural that he ſhould act according to the dictates of reaſon. And ſince order requires that the inferior Being ſhould be directed by the ſuperior, it is manifeſt that all man's

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ſenſes are to be directed by reaſon if reaſon be not thought inferior to one or other of the ſenſes, which is worſe than epicureiſm; hence it follows that intoxication, the immoderate uſe of food, the gratification of any ſenſual appetite, which diſturbs the free exerciſe of reaſon, is by nature forbidden independently on all human laws. Moreover, all that depends on mere human laws, on prejudices of education, or different inſtitutions are ſubject to change, and are in fact different in different countries, according to the difference of the prevailing opinions, but there are certain fixed principles ſubject to no variation, they are and have been the ſame in all times and places; theſe are of courſe implanted in our nature; nor is this ſpeculative principle, the whole is greater than any of its parts, more evident than this moral principle, do not to another what you would think injurious to yourſelf. It is true the mind of man abſorbed in ſenſual pleaſures, blinded by paſſion or prejudice, may miſtake and frequently does the diſtant conſequences and ſometimes the more immediate conſequences, which are drawn from firſt principles. Hence the Indian, knowing that he is obliged to love his friend, thinks it lawful to hate his enemy, on a principle of retaliation, and to expreſs his hatred the more ſtrongly, if he takes a priſoner, will exerciſe on him the moſt wanton cruelty, hence alſo ſome of them put their aged and helpleſs parents to death through a miſtaken principle of commiſeration. The application of general principles to particular circumſtances is ſometimes difficult; to evade this difficulty the great bulk of mankind think themſelves authoriſed to follow the example of others, hence the moſt abſurd cuſtoms have been introduced and continued for ages, the abſurdity of theſe cuſtoms does not argue the want of reaſon in the men, but their indolence and inattention to the voice of reaſon. Thus for example all

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men know that ſome Being ſuperior to man exiſts, and think it neceſſary to ſerve him. The Heathens not conceiving it poſſible that any one Being was ſufficiently wiſe and powerful to frame and direct the univerſe parcelled it out amongſt Deities: a multiplicity once introduced, flattery added every Potentate to the number; leaſt theſe pretended Divinities ſhould be too ſevere, they were painted by their makers ſubject to all the vices, for which they themſelves were remarkable; hence, the moſt ſhameleſs paſſions had their patrons amongſt the Gods. The general principle was ſtrictly true, that there is a Being ſuperior to man, to whom homage is due, but the application of this principle was deteſtable; it was made by paſſion without conſulting reaſon.

In the like manner even Philoſophers and Legiſlators frequently diſagree in opinions, which are not immediate conſequences of intuitive principles, but they never taught that good was to be avoided, and evil purſued, though evil under the appearnce of good has been more than once propoſed.

To pretend that men are by nature inimical to each other, from different cauſes, is to inſult mankind, an offence againſt the human race, which only demonſtrates the unparallelled malignity of the man who dares to make uſe of ſuch an impudent aſſertion. Men, ſo far from hating each other, are formed by nature to love each other, they are formed for ſociety and cannot ſubſiſt without it: the wants of the infantine, infirm, and aged portions of the human ſpecies cannot be ſupplied without the cares of ſociety. That all men have formerly lived without any bond of ſociety like beaſts in the woods, and that they have been gradually formed into civil ſocieties, is a wild unfounded conjecture, contradicted by experience: we have known ſome men who from civilized ſociety transferred to uncivi-

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lized regions, they themſelves and their deſcendants became Savages; but we know of no Savage nation who without the influence of religion planted by the labors and ſufferings of its miniſters have become civilized.

As reaſon is natural to man, and the dictates of reaſon conſtituting what is called the natural law, or in other words man's immediate rule of action, the author of man's Being muſt be the author of the natural law, it is not neceſſary to publiſh this law either by word or writing, becauſe it is implanted in human nature, and is neceſſary for the ſupport of the intelligent world, as the laws of motion to the continuance of that order, and harmony, which exiſts in the phyſical world; a tranſgreſſion therefore of the natural law is manifeſtly an offence againſt its author.

The natural law in its firſt principles is immutable, it commands nothing but what is eſſentially good, and forbids nothing which is not eſſentially bad; in its more remote conſequences, circumſtances may render it ſubject to variation, thus though it be forbidden to kill, it is lawful for the public Magiſtrate to put a criminal to death. But it is never lawful, nor can it, by any change of circumſtances become lawful *to decline from good and do evil.*

Remote conſequences of the natural law are not known to all immediately, the firſt principles are, and cannot be effaced but by the extinction of reaſon. The application of theſe principles to particular caſes is ſometimes defective: thus the Indian knows that good is to be done, and evil avoided, he thinks it juſt to kill his aged and infirm father. The principle he knows but blindly miſapplies it

As it is natural for man to act according to the dictates of reaſon, all virtues as ſuch, are according to the natural law, and all vices againſt it. The former are

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acts of obedience to the Author of Nature, laudable in themſelves; the latter acts of diſobedience, reprehenſible, and conſequently inductive of puniſhment.

Is God the avenger of crimes? The queſtion is extremely ſimple: common ſenſe anſwers in the affirmative.

If he be the avenger of crimes, when does he exerciſe his vindictive juſtice? Sometimes in this life, more frequently and effectually in the next.

Many of the Heathen Philoſophers, and all theſe impious writers, who now aſſume the title, confine man's happineſs to the preſent life. They diſagree as to the conſtituent elements of happineſs. Some of the Heathens placing it in the purſuit of virtue, others in the gratification of the ſenſes, theſe and their followers, the modern ſquad, are juſtly called hogs of Epicurus's ſtye. The Stoics thought cold inſenſibility productive of true happineſs. It can hardly be denied that, the exerciſe of virtue contributes to private and public advantage: the virtuous man enjoys a peace of mind free from the terrors of conſcience, which invade the wicked man, ſometimes in the midſt of riot and tumult, and at all times in the ſilence of ſolitude: for as virtue is according to nature, and vice againſt it, nature approves the one, and cenſures the other; it is therefore as impoſſible for a man to free himſelf from a remorſe of conſcience as it is to diveſt himſelf of human nature. Virtue therefore contributes to private happineſs and vice deſtroys it.

That the exerciſe of virtue contributes to the public welfare and tranquility, muſt be admitted, if it be not thought that, highwaymen, traitors and murderers are to be conſtituted Judges, that men deſtitute of prudence, of juſtice and equity, are to be appointed Governors, that drunkards, proſligates and ſpendthrifs are to poſſeſs all places of truſt and confidence. That man's underſtanding

understanding must be horribly perverted, who thinks it; and he must surpass the demon in impudence who dares to assert it. There are some so barefaced as to pretend that the vices of individuals are useful to the community; it is true the intemperance of the spendthrift enriches the keeper of the brothel, and the hounds and horses of the fox-hunter, enhance the value of the farmer's grain, but it is equally true that they withdraw from the common stock the industry of so many idle hands, whilst they consume a double portion of the fruits of the earth: on the principles of these wild speculatists death and disease are beneficial to society: death, brings money to the heir, and sickness, to the physician.

Though the exercise of virtue contributes much to happiness, it neither does, nor can, make the man truly happy in this life. True happiness excludes all anxiety, pain, sickness and death, and satisfies man's desires to their fullest extent. The most virtuous man is subject to pain, to sickness, to death, his desires of full and permanent happiness neither are nor can be satisfied in this life. Moreover we frequently see virtuous men in the most abject state, their innocence oppressed by power, their reputation blasted by calumny, they themselves the objects of derision, and though a consciousness of rectitude may alleviate their sorrows, it cannot make them happy. Stoic insensibility is an imaginary quality, which is not in human nature. The reward of virtue is, therefore, neither to be obtained, nor expected in this life; nor is vice punished in proportion to its malice: the hypocrite is, of all vicious men, confessedly the most vicious: under the mask of virtue he deceives simplicity, seduces innocence, oppresses weakness, supplants and excludes men of real merit, obtains preferment, honors, rewards and applause. In what appears the punishment of his crimes? He is tor-

tured by his conſcience. True, the terrors of his conſcience diminiſh his felicity, perhaps annul it; but it is not leſs true that, the wicked man has a malignant ſatisfaction, in the ſucceſs of his projects, that he enjoys a diabolical pleaſure in ſacrificing innocence to his private views, of courſe, that to diminiſh his happineſs by the feeble voice of conſcience is not a puniſhment proportioned to his crimes.

Hence it appears that, in the preſent life, the virtuous man cannot be truly, and fully happy, nor the vicious man truly unhappy: for as true happineſs excludes all anxiety and pain, true miſery excludes all comfort and hope. The moſt wicked man though reduced to the laſt ſtage of miſery is not quite bereft of hopes, for death he thinks, at leaſt, will deliver him from his preſent miſery.

Theſe principles evident on the expoſition, ſhew that virtue cannot have its due reward, nor vice its due puniſhment in this preſent life. There is no true happineſs without, at leaſt, the fear, or rather certainty of its ceſſation, nor miſery without ſome ray of comfort or hope of alleviation.

If it be true that virtue is ſeldom rewarded in this life, and never according to merit, and alſo true, that vice frequently eſcapes puniſhment, and is never puniſhed in proportion to its malice, it follows of courſe that, the reward of the one, and the puniſhment of the other is to be referred to a future life. It has been juſtly remarked that no man ever denied the exiſtence of a God, but he, who has every thing to fear from his juſtice. This remark is applicable to a future life: that man muſt be flagitious in the extreme to whom annihilation is a deſirable object, and no other man ever denied or diſbelieved a future life: the Heathens believed it, the ſavage Indians believe it. The diſciples of Epicurus the moſt corrupt of all Heathens rather doubted

doubted than denied it. It is uſeleſs to cite authorities, the truth is indiſputable, there is nothing ſo deeply impreſſed on the mind of man as the belief of futurity. Our modern Philoſophers, though they pretend not to believe it, cannot ceaſe to fear it. For, if they have no certainty that there is an after life as they pretend, they muſt admit that they have no certainty that there is not. A ſtate of uncertainty is a ſtate of anguiſh and anxiety, and having nothing to hope, they muſt have every thing to fear. Nor can this fear be extinguiſhed but with reaſon.

Setting all authority apart, let us conſult reaſon on this ſubject, of all others the moſt important.

It has been already clearly ſhewn that the human ſoul has no principle of diſſolution in it, that it is independent on the body in its higheſt operations; that it is immortal of its own nature, that the dictates of right reaſon are its immediate rule of action, and that every deviation from the dictates of right reaſon, is an offence puniſhable by the author of reaſon. For it is a general rule that, he who gives the law or rule of action, rewards the obſervance of the law, or puniſhes the tranſgreſſion. This obſervance of the law is not always rewarded in the preſent life, nor the moſt capital tranſgreſſions always puniſhed, they muſt therefore in the future; if not, the ſanctity, juſtice and providence of God would be expoſed to cenſure, his ſanctity, in the encouragement which impunity gives to vice, and wickedneſs, his juſtice in not rewarding obedience to his law according to its merits, his providence in not taking the neceſſary meaſures, that all ſhould receive according to their deſerts. He does not deſerve the name of ruler, much leſs of ſovereign ruler, who does not. In vain the Deiſt pretends that God's juſtice, ſanctity and providence is not ſimilar to that of man. It is true, all the imperfections of human juſtice, ſanc-

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tity and providence are excluded, the ſanctity of God infinitely ſurpaſſes that of man in perfection, ſo does his juſtice and his providence? Does a man's ſanctity encreaſe by encouraging vice? Is his juſtice more perfect by diſcouraging virtue? Is he more provident in permitting the worſt of bad ſubjects, to obtain greater privileges than the beſt?

If juſtice requires that virtue ſhould be rewarded, it is yet more conſiſtent with juſtice, that vice ſhould be puniſhed according to its demerits. Why ſo? Becauſe virtue is according to nature and vice againſt it, the virtuous man therefore, follows the plan which the author of his Being has traced and anſwers the end of his creation; the vicious man does not. It is ſtrictly juſt that he ſhould ſuffer: and as it is a diſorder that he ſhould act according to his own will regardleſs of the will of his Creator. Order and juſtice require that he ſhould ſuffer according to the will of his Creator though againſt his own.

The fear of puniſhment in a future life, ſays the Deiſt, was introduced by politicians to reſtrain their ſubjects. It is therefore uſeful to mankind, if anarchy, the worſt of all evils, be prevented by it, or even inſurrection, which is in itſelf ſo great an evil, that oppreſſion cannot authoriſe it. It is an attempt to remove a head-ache by a doſe of arſenic.

But when did theſe politicians meet? Where? By what means have they duped not only the unthinking croud, but the Philoſopher, the man of ſenſe, the man of ſcience, the whole world for ages back, if you except a few two-legged hogs of Epicurus's herd and their worthy ſucceſſors the modern Philoſophers?

God, ſays the Deiſt, is immutable, man's actions therefore cannot offend him, True, man's actions cannot offend God ſo as to introduce any change in his diſpoſitions; but it is equally true, that man does what

what he can to offend him, and thereby introduces a change in himself, instead of being a virtuous man according to rule and order, he becomes a vicious man contrary to rule and order, and is by that same rule brought to order. The immediate rule of man's action is the light of reason, which is an emanation of the divine reason, the universal rule, all actions inconsistent with this rule are disorderly.

Man has an innate desire of happiness, it is implanted in his nature, it is therefore from the author of nature, punishment hereafter is inconsistent with this desire, renders it ineffectual, which cannot be said of a desire implanted by God himself. Hence the Deist pretends to exclude all punishment from a future life. But this innate desire of happiness shews that future happiness is attainable by man, not that all men will attain it, as a horror of future punishment shews the possibility of avoiding it, not that all men will avoid it, God, the supreme ruler, directs all Beings according to their nature, inanimate Beings by fixed and invariable laws, but man possessed of reason is left to his own direction, within certain limits, it is true, that he may not derange the general plan; if then man conducts himself according to the plan traced out by his Creator, he will arrive at the end, if not, it is not surprising that he should be excluded; it would be surprising if he were not: because he would arrive at the term by forsaking the path.

In a word, God by every possible right is man's lawful superior; a lawful superior has a strict right to exact obedience to just and equitable laws, of which the inferior cannot be ignorant but through culpable neglect; the light of reason points out the great principles of the law; a law without proposing either rewards or punishments, without any inducement to observe it, is ridiculous, and argues ignorance and stupidity in the Legislator;

Legiſlator; hence it is manifeſt that obedience claims ſome reward and diſobedience calls aloud for puniſhment. In this life rewards are frequently obtained without merit, ſometimes by the moſt atrocious crimes, and puniſhments inflicted on innocence. This therefore is not the time of retribution. This doctrine juſtifies Providence in the diſtribution of theſe temporal advantages which are thought to conſtitute happineſs in the preſent life. For as man is compoſed of a mortal body and an immortal ſoul, is poſſeſſed of reaſon to direct the choice, and a power of ſelf-determination to make a proper choice, it is perfectly conſiſtent with our ideas of Providence that he ſhould be allowed a certain time of trial, during which, if he not only makes an improper choice, in making an immortal ſoul ſubſervient to a corruptible body contrary to the dictates of reaſon, but obſtinately perſeveres in it, abuſing both liberty and reaſon to the end of the time, that he ſhould receive puniſhment proportioned to the abuſe. Immediately to puniſh would exclude repentance on the part of man, and clemency on the part of his Judge. Never to puniſh would encourage iniquity and make a God of ſanctity, the accomplice of crimes. This reaſoning is applicable to virtue: it is tried in adverſity, and perſeverance ſhews it to be ſolid, its reward therefore muſt ſucceed the time of trial, and not immediately accompany it. Hence the belief of a future life juſtifies Providence in the very unequal diſtribution of proſperity, and adverſity, which to the Heathens was inconceivable, and, as their views were confined to the preſent life, induced many to doubt, and ſome to deny the interference of Providence in human affairs. There is nothing which ſo viſibly ſhews the little value, which God ſets on wealth and power, as the diſtribution he makes, and the ſort of characters to whom theſe gifts are granted. Heliogabalus and Sardanopholus have

have been masters of the world; quære were there two more contemptible wretches in it?

Having thus shewn, by a train of the most conclusive reasoning, that an after life must be admitted, to justify the providence, the justice and sanctity of God, it is not difficult to shew that the resurrection of the body is perfectly consistent with reason: man is a compos'd Being, the soul is not a man, much less the body, the soul and body united constitute the man. Though the soul makes use of the body as an instrument in many of its operations, more particularly in the practice of virtue or vice, yet the body cannot be considered simply as an instrument, but as a part, it is the man, not the soul, that relieves indigence or oppresses innocence, to the man therefore the reward of virtue or the punishment of vice is due, the body therefore must be re-united to the soul that, the whole man, and not a part of him may receive the reward of his virtues or the punishment due to his crimes.

It is in vain to pretend that by death the union is dissolved, and the body reduced to ashes, as if greater power were necessary to re-unite these parts, which though dissolved, exist, than to create, and unite them originally. To deny the possibility of the resurrection is to deny the omnipotence of the Divinity, and turn Atheist. The only reason offered against the resurrection, which deserves a reply, is, that, men are known to feed on human flesh, that, of course, the same particles serve to constitute the bodies of different men. To obviate this, and all similar difficulties, it must be considered that, though the same identical body must be united to the soul, else it would not be a resurrection of the fallen body, but an assumption of another, it is not necessary that all the different particles of matter which have successively served to form the body should be united in its resurrection: of these the superfluous

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muſt be rejected as uſeleſs, hence then if the particles of one body, which have ſerved to conſtitute another, be neceſſary to the former, they may be reſtored, and their place ſuppplied in the latter, by others, which would have been ſuperfluous. There is no Savage whoſe food is confined to human fleſh: he muſt conſume other things alſo, as water, fruits and vegetables, his body of courſe, cannot be entirely formed of the fleſh of his fellows. In the reſurrection all excreſcences will be retrenched, and defects ſupplied, by the power of God.

A queſtion of no ſmall importance preſents itſelf, that is, whether this future life, in which the juſt man obtains the reward of his virtues, and the impious man the puniſhment of his crimes, be eternal and immutable or terminable after a certain time.

If the reſurrection of the juſt be admitted and a ſtate of happineſs aſſigned, as the reward of their virtues, no poſſible reaſon can be aſſigned why they ſhould be deprived of it. The privation of ſovereign happineſs is a moſt ſevere puniſhment, puniſhment always ſuppoſes a crime, which in a ſtate of conſummate happineſs is impoſſible. Add to this, that a ſtate of conſummate happineſs excludes every evil, and every apprehenſion of evil. The loſs of ſovereign happineſs is the greateſt of all evils, and the certainty of loſing it, an object of the greateſt and moſt juſt apprehenſion.

Moreover man does not arrive at his ultimate end until all his natural deſires are ſatisfied, he not only deſires happineſs, but the continuation of happineſs, for ſince he deſires happineſs but for himſelf, he muſt deſire it to continue, as long as he himſelf continues to exiſt, and as he is himſelf immortal his happineſs muſt be ſo too.

Nothing ſhort of conſummate happineſs can ſatisfy the

the natural desires of man: whilst happiness is incomplete it is capable of some addition, and the mind of man, boundless in its desires, must continue to desire what is wanted, until its happiness be consummate. Hence it appears that no created object can make man happy, because all created objects are limited; limitation argues a want of some perfection, which is the object of desire. Hence also it follows that consummate happiness cannot be obtained in this life: for this life is subject to many and unavoidable evils, ignorance, inordinate attachments, infirmities and death, no wealth, no power, can ward off these.

True and consummate happiness consists in the contemplation of God, no limited object can make man truly happy. God alone is infinite, he is the source of true happiness: in him the understanding sees all truth, and in him the will finds all that is good, in him terminate all the pursuits of man, he is his last end as he is his first beginning. The will always tends to its object whilst absent, and rests in the possession of the object when present.

Though happiness consists in the contemplation of God, and is rather the operation of the understanding contemplating the object, and proposing it to the will, than of the will, which is pleased in the possession, yet true happiness does not consist in that confused knowledge, which all men have of the Divinity; whether the idea of a God, be innate in man, that is, impressed on the soul at the instant of its creation, as some pretend, or so easily attained that the least reflection suffices to form it, it is certain that this confused knowledge is subject to numberless errors: it is useless to speak of the errors of the Heathens, they are known to every man, who knows any thing, error is an evil, which true happiness excludes.

Nor does consummate happiness consist in that know-

ledge of God, which is obtained by demonſtration : the Philoſopher demonſtrates that the divine eſſence is one eternal, immutable, infinitely wiſe and powerful, unlimited in all perfection, but, as reaſon, nor even imagination cannot reach infinity, the mind is yet deſirous of having a more adequate idea of all theſe perfections, and of an infinite number of perfections, of which we have no idea at all.

Finally, conſummate happineſs does not conſiſt in the knowledge of God as obtained by faith : though many of God's perfections be known to us by faith, which human reaſon could not attain, and even theſe perfections, which reaſon may attain, are more clearly known by faith, as is manifeſt from this that many of the divine perfections clearly known to the Chriſtian Philoſopher, were but obſcurely known, if at all, to the Heathen : yet, as by faith, theſe perfections tranſcending reaſon, and founded on external evidence, are not clearly conceived, the mind is yet deſirous of a more conſummate knowledge. The light of faith does not make the object viſible to the underſtanding, but it makes it viſibly credible, what we ſee is the object of ſcience, not of faith; hence it follows that conſummate happineſs conſiſts in ſeeing God as he is in himſelf : until this object is obtained the mind is in purſuit, conſequently never at reſt; but this view of God as he is in himſelf terminates all purſuits : in him the underſtanding ſees all truth, it can deſire no more ; in him the will finds all that is good, it can ſeek no more. All the deſires of the ſoul may be reduced to four, that of knowledge, of excellence, of pleaſure, and a perpetual continuation of it. By a diſtinct view of all truth, the deſire of knowledge is perfectly ſatiated, no greater excellence can be ſought than a participation of the divine, which is attained by the adheſion and quieſcence of the underſtanding to truth in its ſource, and of the will to ſovereign

vereign goodneſs; for when one Being is united to another both by diſtinct knowledge, and boundleſs love, no union can be more ſtrict, hence the Saints abſorbed in the excellence of God participate in it, and all deſires of greater excellence muſt ceaſe. Pleaſure reſults from the poſſeſſion of the object of deſire, and is proportioned to the object. The poſſeſſion of infinite goodneſs muſt produce unlimited pleaſure. Happineſs would not be conſummate if any apprehenſion of loſing it remain, but a clear and diſtinct view of God removes all apprehenſion, for in this view conſiſts eternal life.

This diſtinct view of the Divinity is not attainable by the ſoul of man from its natural powers. For that object which infinitely tranſcends the human underſtanding cannot be clearly conceived by it; no exertion of its natural powers can reach infinity. Hence an influx of the divine light is indiſpenſably neceſſary to enable any created underſtanding to ſee the Divinity: if an agent be rendered capable of an action, which ſurpaſſes its natural powers, it muſt be by extending the power, which it formerly poſſeſſed, or by the addition of ſome new power, which it did not poſſeſs; there is no extenſion of a finite power, which can raiſe it to an action infinitely tranſcending its nature, hence it is eſſentially neceſſary to add a power, which the underſtanding does not poſſeſs, to enable it clearly and diſtinctly to ſee the Divinity. This addition of intellectual power is called the illumination of the underſtanding.

Though the underſtanding of man cannot by its natural powers have a diſtinct view of the Divinity, yet it is his laſt end and the only object capable of fixing all his deſires: the laſt end of the principal agent is that of all ſubordinate agents; the underſtanding is in man the principal agent: it propoſes all objects to the will, the will directs the inferior appetites, and theſe ſet the body in motion.

motion. The laſt end of man is therefore that of the underſtanding. The object of the underſtanding is truth, and its ultimate end, primary truth in its ſource, that is, in the Divinity, thus every man ſeeing any effect is naturally deſirous of knowing the cauſe, and this deſire is never ſatisfied until the firſt great cauſe of all things is known. In this firſt cauſe all enquiries terminate; hence man's laſt end is to know his God, and in this diſtinct viſion of God he obtains poſſeſſion of eternal life. The act is ſpecified by its object, and partakes of the perfection of its object, the contemplation of eternal truth is not merely in time, the object is itſelf eternal, the light by which the underſtanding contemplates the object is alſo eternal, and the ſoul is immortal, hence poſſeſſion of eternal life is obtained by a diſtinct view of God. Nor can it be loſt. In it conſummate happineſs conſiſts, it muſt therefore exclude every apprehenſion, every poſſibility of its ceſſation. They who ſee God immediately cannot ceaſe to love him, for, as the immediate viſion of the Divinity conſtitutes perfect happineſs, it excludes every evil, the underſtanding is free from error, ſeeing truth in its very ſource, it therefore cannot propoſe a more lovely object to the will, and the will itſelf poſſeſſed of the ſource of all goodneſs can purſue no other object.

Nor will God withdraw that divine light, by which they ſee him, nor otherwiſe conceal himſelf from them: either the one or the other would be a ſevere puniſhment, muſt therefore ſuppoſe ſome crime, which in a ſtate of conſummate happineſs is impoſſible.

From all we have ſaid on this ſubject it appears perfectly conſiſtent with reaſon that the reward of the juſt ſhould be eternal. From the natural deſire of man and his capacity to attain happineſs, conſummate happineſs muſt be his laſt end. If this end were impoſſible, and

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to be attained by no man, the desire impressed on the soul of man would be vain, and illusive; it would argue the malice of its author, not that sovereign goodness which is characteristic of the Divinity. If this end be attainable, it is but reasonable that these, in preference and exclusively, should attain it, whose actions have been in the course of life conformable to that rule of conduct, which they have received from their author, that is, the light of reason. To exclude these, and admit others, whose actions have been invariably influenced by passion, regardless of the dictates of reason, or even to admit both indiscriminately, is inconsistent with the justice, the sanctity, the wisdom and providence of God.

The next question which presents itself is of all others the most important and the most violently contested by all the partizans of pleasure, that is, the punishment of vice. Is it in a future life eternal?

It must be admitted that man by acting contrary to the dictates of reason, at least, withholds that obedience which he owes his maker; that he shews a contempt of the law, or rule of action impressed on his mind, and consequently of the Legislator; that though no action of his can at all affect his good, who from his nature is incapable of being effectively injured, the injury as far as in man's power is offered by a formal act of disobedience and contempt, add to this that an injury is effectively offered, and sustained, either by the person who commits the crime, or some other person who is under the direction of God's providence, and consequently under his protection. These truths are incontestible and from them it evidently follows that sin is offensive and displeasing to the Divinity.

The offence may be greater or less as it is more or less consistent with rule, thus, a small excess is not so inconsistent with the rule of temperance as absolute intoxication.

toxication. The ſtoic Philoſophers and ſome modern ſpeculatiſts think all ſins equal, as ſin is a privation of rectitude, and privations, ſay they, are neither increaſed, nor diminiſhed. This is one of the many paradoxes, which the ſpirit of innovation has introduced, which puts common ſenſe to the bluſh. What! a jocoſe lie to amuſe a company is as grievous an offence as the maſſacre of a city! No, there is a total and a partial privation. Death is a total privation of life, and diſeaſe but a partial privation, or if you will take diſeaſe for a privation of health, it moſt certainly can be increaſed or diminiſhed. The privation of rectitude in ſin is of this nature, it may increaſe or diminiſh, it may be more or leſs conſiſtent with rule, conſequently more or leſs grievous.

If there be a total deviation from the laſt end, that is, if a man formally prefers the purſuit, or poſſeſſion of any created object, to the purſuit or poſſeſſion of conſummate happineſs, in the contemplation of the Divinity, the ſin is called mortal becauſe it is a total privation of ſpiritual life. If the deviation be not abſolute, that is, if a formal preference be not given to ſome created object, but ſome act committed, which though defective, through inadvertence, or levity, is not formally and maliciouſly againſt rule, the offence is called venial, becauſe it does not deſtroy man's tendency to his laſt end, though it may retard and impede him. If the offence be mortal, it is in its own nature irreparable: as after death there remains no principle in the body, which can reſtore life, ſo after the perpetration of a mortal crime, there remains no principle in the ſoul, which can reinſtate it. If the offence be venial it may be effaced, as in the body, whilſt life remains, a diſeaſe may be removed, ſo whilſt the tendency to the laſt end continues in the ſoul, the impediments may be removed; but if by a total deviation that tendency

dency be loſt, the attainment of the end is impracticable. If the human body be put in contact with certain ſubſtances, it contracts a ſtain, and loſes its native beauty, ſo the ſoul from an inordinate attachment to forbidden objects, contracts the ſtain of ſin, and loſes its beauty. There is a two-fold beauty in the ſoul unſullied by ſin; the firſt reſulting from the light of reaſon, and the ſecond from the light of grace. This ſtain remains, though the act which produced it paſſes, as the ſtain contracted by the body, from being in contact with ſome foul ſubſtance, remains, though the ſubſtance be removed. As the ſtain of ſin is contracted by an attachment to ſome forbidden object which cauſes a deviation from the laſt end, it is neceſſary not only to renounce the attachment, but alſo to reſume a direction to the laſt end, as it is neceſſary not only to remove the foul ſubſtance which ſtains the body, but alſo to cleanſe the ſtain; hence the immutability of the will immediately on the termination of life. The laſt inſtant of life being the laſt of the time of trial, the ſoul has arrived at the end, which in life ſhe purſued: if her purſuits were directed to the proper end according to the dictates of reaſon, her reward is certain; if on the contrary abuſing reaſon, and liberty, her purſuits during the time of trial, were directed to ſome end, which reaſon condemns, her puniſhment is unavoidable. As mortal ſin extinguiſhes every principle of life in the ſoul, it has not power within itſelf to reſume its tendency to the laſt end. During the time of trial an aſſiſtance both natural, and ſupernatural, is offered to enable the ſoul to reſume the ſtrait path, if rejected in the time of trial, when that time ceaſes, ſuch aſſiſtance would be uſeleſs, and is offered no more; hence the will is immutably fixed on evil. Add to this that it is natural for every thing when it comes to its laſt term to reſt in it, if it be not ſet in motion and removed

moved from it by ſome more powerful agent. The man, who in the courſe of life has directed his purſuits to the attainment of ſome created object, or the gratification of ſome paſſion, regardleſs of the laſt end of his creation, is, at death, arrived at the term, the affection of his mind is therefore immutably fixed to the object of his purſuits, and cannot be changed but by ſome exertion of divine power. It is in vain to expect ſuch an exertion: it would extend the time of trial beyond its term, and confound it with the time of reward, and puniſhment; hence it is manifeſt that the puniſhment of ſin muſt be eternal: becauſe in the ſinful ſoul there is no power of deſtroying that affection to an improper object, which induces puniſhment, nor any diſpoſition to be diſengaged from it by the divine power.

Every tranſgreſſion of the law is inductive of puniſhment: it is the ſanction of the law, without which no law can exiſt; this puniſhment is from the nature of things two-fold, an excluſion from the poſſeſſion of the laſt end, and ſenſible pain. Juſtice proportions the puniſhment to the offence: there is no puniſhment better proportioned to a contempt of the laſt end, than an abſolute excluſion, but as the tranſgreſſion does not ſimply conſiſt in a contempt of the laſt end, but alſo in an adherence to ſome improper end, or ſenſible object, juſtice adds a ſenſible pain, correſpondent to this inordinate attachment. If no ſenſible pain were inflicted, the puniſhment would not be proportioned to the offence: it might be conſidered as null, in the idea of the criminal, however great in itſelf: an excluſion from that, which is not deſired, is not thought a puniſhment by any man: hence ſenſible pain, beſides an excluſion from the poſſeſſion of God, is eſſentially neceſſary to ſanction the law. Both the one and the other muſt be eternal: for ſince that diſpoſition of the ſoul, which

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prefers ſome ſenſible object to the poſſeſſion of conſummate happineſs in the contemplation of God, is inductive of puniſhment as an abuſe of reaſon, whilſt that diſpoſition continues the puniſhment correſpondent to it muſt continue, death the laſt term immutably fixes this criminal diſpoſition, makes it eternal, and conſequently the puniſhment due to it. It is true the ſoul has, from its nature, a capacity of receiving grace in this life, and glory in the next. It has no natural power of acquiring either the one or the other becauſe they tranſcend the order of nature and hence are called ſupernatural; but there is this eſſential difference that, in the courſe of life, the will is not immutably fixed, hence though the ſoul has no power of reſuming that life of grace, which ſin has extinguiſhed, it has yet the capacity of receiving this life from the divine power, but in death the will is immutably fixed, and the capacity of receiving either grace, or glory, may in ſome ſenſe be ſaid to remain, there is an inſuperable bar, that is, the immutability of the will in its affection to ſome forbidden object.

A thouſand difficulties have been ſtarted againſt this doctrine, which however ſimple and founded on the moſt ſolid principles of reaſon it may appear, is yet in itſelf ſo terrible, that the mind of man, as by inſtinct, endeavors to invalidate or avoid it. And all theſe men, whoſe purſuits are confined to pleaſure, unanimouſly reject it.

Some pretend that to inflict an endleſs puniſhment for an inſtantaneous tranſgreſſion, is inconſiſtent with juſtice, with goodneſs, with mercy or even with power. Theſe men ſeem to imagine that the puniſhment of a crime ſhould be of the ſame duration with the tranſgreſſion, a rule obſerved in no Court of Equity: the puniſhment is proportioned to the malice of the crime, not to its duration, and the malice of an offence is pro-

portioned to the dignity of the perſon offended, an offence of the Divinity is of unbounded malice, and deſerves endleſs puniſhment, it is therefore perfectly conſiſtent with juſtice. In all countries, for any enormous crime againſt ſociety a man is for ever retrenched from that ſociety whether by death or perpetual baniſhment; an offence againſt charity, the bond of union amongſt the bleſſed, is a capital offence againſt that ſociety, and of courſe deſerves a perpetual excluſion.

Add to this that not only the act but the deſire, and the attachment to any forbidden object, is criminal, and conſequently deſerving of puniſhment. The man who perſeveres until death in purſuit of any created object, however flattering to his vanity, his ambition or his ſenſuality, has made his election: he has not only preferred that object to the poſſeſſion of conſummate happineſs in the contemplation of his God, in oppoſition to the dictates of reaſon, but obſtinately perſevered in that diſpoſition to the end, and ſince death immutably fixes his affection, it muſt be perpetual, and the correſpondent puniſhment of equal duration. Hence to inflict endleſs puniſhment is a neceſſary effect of juſtice. It is alſo perfectly conſiſtent with ſovereign goodneſs: to countenance or encourage evil, is not an effect of goodneſs, it would rather argue a defect; infinite goodneſs is infinitely oppoſite to evil, infinitely remote from evil, and of courſe infinitely inimical to evil. Whilſt this oppoſition continues, ſovereign goodneſs will exclude and diſcountenance evil; and ſince by death the ſinner's will is immutably fixed on evil, this oppoſition muſt be perpetual.

An act of mercy always proceeds from love, and, as God is ſovereignly good, and therefore infinitely inimical to evil, neither does nor can love that ſoul, which is immutably fixed on evil, he can extend no act of mercy

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to her, perpetual puniſhment is therefore conſiſtent with mercy. This reaſoning is applicable to clemency.

All compariſons between God and ſovereign Princes, or parents, are defective: a compariſon might as well be inſtituted between *time* and *ſpace*. Princes and parents are men, are bound by certain laws to their ſubjects and children, ſtrictly obliged to attend to their welfare, an offence againſt them conſidered as ſuch is limited as they are themſelves. An offence againſt the Almighty is of courſe illimited in its malice, as he is infinite in goodneſs, if therefore an offence againſt an indulgent parent, or beneficent Prince argues a certain malice in the offender, which deſerves a temporal puniſhment proportioned to the offence, an offence againſt the Almighty, the univerſal Sovereign, Parent and Benefactor, from whom the offender holds life and all that contributes to ſuport life, to whom on the title of creation, of conſervation, of ſubjection, of gratitude, of love and dependence, he owes himſelf, and to whoſe glory he is obliged to contribute, ſuch an offence, and obſtinate perſeverance in it to the end, deſerves unqueſtionably a puniſhment endleſs as is the offence.

A temporal Prince in inflicting puniſhment may be guilty of cruelty, though the puniſhment does not ſurpaſs the enormity of the offence, becauſe he may intend the ſufferings of the criminal, not the ſatisfaction due to juſtice. This is inconſiſtent with divine goodneſs. It is the ſatisfaction due to juſtice, which is intended, and in it there is no cruelty.

In a word, if the man, who perſeveres in ſin to the end, ceaſes to ſin, it is becauſe he ceaſes to live. His deſire of ſin is perpetual and the puniſhment alſo.

Hitherto we have reaſoned on the attributes of the Deity as known to us by the light of reaſon unaſſiſted by any ſuperior light, and ſhewn that God is the firſt principle, and the laſt end of all his creatures: that all the

the Beings which compoſe the univerſe, hold from him their exiſtence, and the continuation of their exiſtence; that his providence ſuperintends and directs all creatures, the inanimate by fixed and determined laws; the irrrational by unerring inſtinct, preſenting rules for the rational part of his creatures to direct themſelves, never allowing them to diſturb the general plan, which in his wiſdom he has formed for the manifeſtation of his glory; we have alſo ſhewn that reaſon and free agency are excellent gifts worthy of their Author, of theſe the proper uſe and not the abuſe was intended, from the abuſe reſults moral evil, the exiſtence of which argues the malice of the evil doer, but does not affect the ſovereign goodneſs of God, who though he can neither encourage nor countenance evil, is not obliged to prevent it.

We have alſo ſhewn that a ſtate of trial, in which, if man acted conſiſtently with the dictates of reaſon, he ſhould obtain a reward, or, if he abuſed and perverted reaſon, he ſhould be expoſed to puniſhment, was reconcileable with the idea of Providence, and then proceeded to ſhew that the reward obtained by virtue or the puniſhment inflicted on vice muſt be without end.

In the courſe of the work we have remarked that man's innate deſire of happineſs, which he invariably purſues, however miſtaken in the object, and the boundleſs capacity of his mind, ſhew that he was intended for conſummate happineſs, which is to be attained but in the contemplation of the Divinity, in which truth ſeen immediately ſatisfies the underſtanding, and goodneſs in its ſource ſatiates all the deſires of the will. We have alſo clearly ſhewn that, there is no natural power in man equal to the attainment of this object, that no extenſion of his natural powers can arrive at it, that, what is called the light of glory, is indiſpenſably neceſſary. An example of this we have

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in the natural order. The eye, however well conſtituted, or however its viſual powers may be increaſed or extended, cannot ſee an object even the moſt viſible, if totally deſtitute of light. How this light of glory is to be obtained is not immediately known to man from the light of reaſon, hence the abſolute neceſſity of revelation to enable man to attain the end, for which he was originally intended, as that capacity of arriving at the end with proper aſſiſtance manifeſtly ſhews.

The Heathen Philoſophers, whoſe powers of reaſoning were certainly great, and whoſe ſtudies were intenſe, were notwithſtanding ſubject to the moſt groſs and ridiculous errors. The unity of the Divine Being they knew, yet dared not avow it; of his providence they ſpoke in ambiguous terms; their frequent conſultation of oracles ſhew their belief of his preſcience, but this they thought dependent on the decrees of fate, by which all their pretended Gods were ſhackled. Their modes of worſhip were indecent and the whole plan of religion, which they had formed, compoſed of ſenſeleſs errors and ridiculous practices, to ſay no more.

Flattery firſt introduced a multiplicity of Deities, as theſe were faſhioned by the makers according to their own fancies they were made ſubject to all the vices, to which the Heathens themſelves were addicted, hence there is no paſſion, however extravagant, which had not its patron or patroneſs amongſt the Heathen Deities; this abuſe was ſo univerſal that one of their moſt ſevere moraliſts thought intoxication laudable in honor of Bacchus, and public proſtitution commendable in honor of Venus. Our modern Philoſophers, men abſorbed in ſenſuality, muſt regret theſe happy times, when they could with impunity and honor give a looſe to the moſt blind and ſenſeleſs deſires. Hence they unanimouſly reject a revealed religion, well know-

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ing that reaſon, unaſſiſted by a ſuperior light, is not more ſtrong now than in the days of Heathen ſuperſtition, conſequently incapable of reſtraining the violence of paſſion, and frequently acting in concert with it. A revealed religion with its promiſes of rewards, and puniſhments, is a moſt powerful reſtraint for theſe men, it has no attractive: it holds out nothing to them but confuſion here and torments hereafter. Theſe thoughts produce a certain anxiety, which diſturbs them in the enjoyment of their pleaſures, to quell this anxiety they exhauſt their imagination in purſuit of ſome plauſible reaſon to think this revealed religion with all its terrors a mere bug-bear. They have recourſe to what remains of the writings of the Heathens and glean all they have ſaid againſt revealed religion. This they obtrude on the ignorant, who form a vaſt majority in all ſocieties, as the productions of their own brains, gratifying at the ſame time both their malice and their vanity. It is in vain to claſs them as ſome writers do. They are all engaged in the ſame purſuit, that is, Epicurean pleaſure, all equally adverſe to that revealed religion, which condemns, and terrifies them, all declared enemies to ſubordination and order, and as ſuch enemies both to God and man. Theſe unfortunate men endeavor to perſuade themſelves, and others, that revelation is impoſſible, that it is uſeleſs, that it is totally unneceſſary, that it is not credible. Reaſon in their opinion is more than ſufficient to direct man to attain the end of his creation, and to pay the Supreme Being the homage which he exacts.

By revelation is underſtood a certain knowledge, which God communicates of the divine nature, or the divine will, hence many things are known from revelation, which reaſon cannot attain.

To reaſon againſt the poſſibility of revelation, argues the moſt ſtupid ignorance, as if God, whoſe underſtanding

ing is infinite and poſſeſſed of an infinity of truths, to which man's reaſon cannot reach, were incapable of making any of theſe truths known to him; one man communicates his ideas to another by the intervention of ſounds, or letters, which are material, though ideas are ſpiritual; and omnipotence, which has formed the tongue, the eye and the ear, the air which conveys ſound, and the light which impreſſes the image of the object on the optic nerve, will be deprived of this faculty!

But theſe truths tranſcend the knowledge of man. Yes, if unaſſiſted by a ſuperior light, as the ſatellites of Jupiter eſcape the naked eye, but are clearly ſeen by the aſſiſtance of the teleſcope.

We every day ſee men learn from other men truths, of which they had no previous idea, which ſeem to contradict their ideas, though theſe men, from whom they learn, have no power of infuſing light in their minds. What abſurdity then to pretend that from almighty power, and infinite wiſdom, they may not learn truths, of which they neither had nor would have any previous knowledge?

Theſe truths, it is true, are not in the natural order or the common courſe of things, but they are perfectly conſiſtent with it, for there is nothing more natural than for an artiſt to make any change, which he thinks proper, in a piece of mechaniſm, and with reſpect to God the whole univerſe is ſuch. This alſo ſhews that the preſent order of things was an effect of choice, not of any natural determination. By the interference of ſecondary cauſes we every day ſee deviations from the eſtabliſhed order of things, or, if you will, from that order which frequently happens, to that which rarely happens, without prejudice of Divine Providence. Is the power and efficacy of the primary cauſe all-wiſe and omnipotent, more confined than that of a ſecondary cauſe? The idea is ridiculous in the extreme

extreme. But continues the Deiſt we have no certainty of any revelation made to man, theſe who pretend to have heard truths revealed might have been dupes or impoſtors: it cannot be proved that they did not intend to deceive us; nor can it be proved that they themſelves were not deceived. To this the writer replies that there are proofs the moſt ſatisfactory, that the men, who tranſmitted revealed truths of religion to us, were neither deceived nor deceivers; that they did not intend to deceive, and if they did, that they could not. Theſe proofs are taken from the nature of theſe truths themſelves, which breathe nothing contrary to reaſon, nothing, which does not give man elevated ideas of his Creator, nothing, which does not inſpire ſanctity and virtue, nothing, which does not tend to man's perfection here, and happineſs hereafter, in a word nothing, which does not ſhew the divinity of the Author: theſe may be conſidered as the internal evidence of revealed truths, and the external proofs are taken from the character of the writers, and the impoſſibility of their impoſing on the world; they were men under the influence of no temporal intereſt, had no ſiniſter views; ſimply and unequivocally they atteſted the truth, knowing it muſt be at the expenſe of their lives. They foretold what it was not poſſible for man to foreſee, and in confirmation of the truths, which they announced, the laws of motion, at other times invariable, were frequently ſuſpended. That there have been miracles ſuppoſed, and revelations feigned intentionally to deceive, is true, but that indiſcriminately all have been dupes and impoſtors; that of the many thouſands who atteſt, of the many men of the moſt profound erudition, and great penetration who aſſert that they themſelves were witneſſes, there has not been one honeſt man, is a moſt impudent and ſhameleſs aſſertion, an aſſertion which a man who has any remains of modeſty would not

not dare to make: he might as well pretend that becauſe ſome men tell lies, no man tells truth, or becauſe there are ſome bank notes forged there are none of any value, or, if you will, becauſe there are ſome men blind, there are none who can ſee; but he is told that there are certain rules for detecting falſhood, that theſe muſt be applied, and the deceit, if any there be, muſt appear. Theſe ſuppoſed miracles and feigned revelations ſo far from ſhewing that all are ſo, evidently argue the contrary: for falſhood is the fiction of truth, and copies, however faithleſs and faulty, ſhew the original true, hence if there were no true miracles, there never would have been a falſe one, nor would there be a fictitious revelation, if there had not been a real one previous, which the fiction counterfeits.

The revelation of myſteries, that is, of truths to reaſon inconceivable, is, if we believe the Deiſt, totally impoſſible. Yet we know, and the Deiſt muſt know, if he knows any thing, that many truths even in the natural order, and within the limited ſphere of human reaſon, are evident to men of ſcience, which to the illiterate Mechanic, are as myſterious as any revealed truth whatſoever. Will not the unlearned Mechanic believe the Aſtronomer that the Earth performs its revolution round the Sun, though his ſenſes tell him, and ſeem to aſſure the contrary. The aſſertion he muſt believe ſimply on the credit of the Aſtronomer, becauſe he has not the moſt diſtant idea of the principles on which it is founded, the Deiſt ſurely will admit that the divine underſtanding as far ſurpaſſes the human, as that of the moſt learned man, does the reaſoning faculty of the artiſan; if then the credit of the Aſtronomer be ſufficient to eſtabliſh a truth, which contradicts ſenſe, why may not the infallibility of the divine word eſtabliſh a truth which tranſcends reaſon?

Myſterious truths are not evident in themſelves, that is, they do not appear immediately to us, but they are evidently certain, becauſe they are founded on the divine word, which excludes falſhood. The object of reaſon is to determine whether the truth propoſed be revealed or not; and, as that is matter of fact, it is determined as all other facts are by concurring teſtimonies: if the motives of credibility be ſufficiently ſtrong to induce a well-founded belief, that the truth propoſed has been revealed, the enquiries of human reaſon ceaſe: why ſo? Becauſe there is nothing more reaſonable than to believe infallible authority, however myſterious the truth may appear.

Theſe miracles by which revealed truths were firſt eſtabliſhed, are yet continued, not in themſelves, but in their effect, the converſion of the world, which is of all others the greateſt, a viſible miracle which flaſhes conviction on the underſtanding: that the learned, and the ignorant, the Prince and the peaſant, men of all nations, and times, whoſe names and cuſtoms are as different as their faces, ſhould unanimouſly admit truths inconceivable, inductive of the moſt ſevere and mortifying reſtraints, contradicting the moſt violent inclinations of corrupt nature, is a miraculous effect of almighty power, and if this converſion of the world be effected without a miracle, it is itſelf greater than any poſſible miracle. Add to this, that the revelation of truths tranſcending reaſon is indiſpenſably neceſſary to direct man to a ſupernatural end, for which we have already ſhewn him to be originally intended. As man can never deſire that, of which he has no idea, nor can he have recourſe to means, which are to him not known, it is therefore neceſſary, that this ſupernatural end ſhould be revealed to him, and the means by which it may be attained, and ſince the means are always proportioned to the end, the end being ſupernatural, that

that is, tranſcending the natural powers of man, the means muſt be ſo too.

It is true myſterious objects are not viſible to the eye, but we believe many things, which we do not ſee, nor cannot ſee, our thoughts are not viſible to the eye, nor are the thoughts or ſecret diſpoſitions of others viſible even to our minds, yet we believe that other men think, of this we have indications ſufficiently ſtrong to remove all doubts. It is from ſuch indications that we believe myſterious truths revealed, which are viſible neither to our eyes nor to our minds, truths of courſe, which give us a more ſublime idea of our God, and a more diſtinct knowledge of the divine nature. The moſt diſtinct knowledge that we can have of the divine nature, is, that it infinitely ſurpaſſes the utmoſt ſtretch of any limited imagination, ſuch is the idea, which certain revealed myſteries convey.

If, ſays the Deiſt, a revealed religion be ſubſtituted to the natural religion common to all, and at all times, it argues a change incompatible with the immutability of God. To this it may be replied that God's decrees are eternal, but the execution of theſe decrees is ſucceſſive, according to the order which he himſelf has determined.

It is not more ſtrange than true that men are found ſo blinded by prejudice as to aſſert that revelation is not uſeful to man, as if it were uſeleſs to man to learn, by a ſimple, conciſe and unerring method, all that in this life he can know of the divine nature, of the worſhip which the Deity expects, and exacts, and all his relative duties as a man, and a member of ſociety. If inconveniences have happened, and different ſects have been formed, diſagreeing in opinions, this is not imputable to revelation, but to the depravity of man, who endeavors to warp revelation from its true and natural ſignification, and make it ſubſervient to his private views :

revelation

revelation is not more abuſed than reaſon. Will any man be ſo perverſe as to pretend that reaſon is uſeleſs becauſe it is ſo often abuſed, and ſometimes to the worſt of purpoſes?

The advantages which reſult from revelation are innumerable and invaluable: without it a great majority of the human ſpecies could never attain a competent knowledge of the Divinity, or of their own relative duties, ſome through a natural indiſpoſition are incapable of acquiring this knowledge, others, whoſe whole time is abſorbed in purſuit of the firſt neceſſaries of life, food and raiment, many whoſe time is devoted to pleaſure, youth in general is incapable of the intenſe ſtudy and the abſtruſe and metaphyſical diſquiſitions neceſſary. To obtain by dint of reaſoning, even a ſlender knowledge of the divine attributes, to paſs in ſilence the mutability of the human mind, continually changing its opinions if it be not fixed by infallible authority. There are in revelation many obſcure paſſages, ſome from the nature of the truths which they diſcloſe, ſome, which at the time, and in the places, where they were firſt diſcloſed, were perfectly intelligible, at this diſtance from both, appear to us obſcure, and ſome obſcurities intended by the writers themſelves to exerciſe the mind of the reader, and ſuppreſs his pride, but the attributes of the Divinity are clearly and diſtinctly revealed; the end of man's creation; the great principles of morality; the means, by which, this end is to be obtained, and many other things, which human reaſon could not diſcover, are announced without any ambiguity. If theſe principles of morality are by ſome neglected, it only proves that paſſion in ſome men overpowers all reſtraints, not that the reſtraint impoſed by revealed religion is weak or uſeleſs.

From what we have ſaid appears not only the utility

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but the neceſſity of revelation. The inſufficiency of reaſon to direct man in the purſuit of true happineſs is known from the experience of all ages: not one of the Heathen Philoſophers, after all their reſearches, diſcovered that, which conſtitutes it; not one who did not, both by precept and example, authoriſe intolerable errors in morality. The idolatrous ſuperſtitions of all the different nations whom revelation did not enlighten atteſt this truth; that there is but God himſelf, who can teach his creatures to honor and adore him in ſpirit and truth; the moſt ſenſible and convincing proof may be taken from the men who oppoſe this truth. Whilſt they boaſt the ſufficiency of human reaſon, they confound vice with virtue, they authoriſe licentiouſneſs, applaud ſuicide, encourage rebellion, remove all reſtraints, break down all the barriers. The principles taught in this new ſchool are not ſimply ſubverſive of ſocial happineſs but abſolutely deſtructive of the human ſpecies. There is between our modern Philoſophers and their predeceſſors the Heathens, this remarkable difference, that in the Heathen ſchools truth was ſought but through the inability of reaſon not affiſted by revelation not to be found, in our modern ſchools truth preſents itſelf and is expelled whilſt the moſt abſurd falſhoods ſupply its place.

The revelation of ſome ſupernatural truths was indiſpenſably neceſſary at all times, and muſt have been co-eval with the creation. For ſince man was intended for a ſupernatural end, and could neither by his natural powers know the end, nor the means, to attain the end, he muſt have known them from revelation, elſe that innate deſire of conſummate happineſs implanted in his nature, and that capacity of enjoying it, would have been illuſive, which is blaſphemy to aſſert; the end therefore of his creation, and the means to obtain the end, muſt have been revealed to our firſt Parent, who,

who, being the immediate principle of the human ſpecies, muſt have been perfect both in body and mind, in body, to pro-create, and in mind, to inſtruct, and from him this primitive revelation muſt have been tranſmitted to his poſterity, whether by oral tradition, as ſeems probable, or by written documents, which ſeems more probable. To convey our thoughts to the eye by ſigns, as to the ear by ſounds, being equally a gift of the Creator, in the opinion of the moſt intelligent men.

Add to this, that a certainty of pardon for ſins committed on certain conditions is a ſtrong incentive to virtue; this certainty cannot be obtained but from revelation: by the light of reaſon we know that God is infinitely merciful, but we know alſo that he is infinitely juſt, it is impoſſible to know from reaſon on what conditions his juſtice may be ſatisfied, ſo as to extend his mercy to the man, who has been guilty of a capital offence, hence deſpair would be a neceſſary conſequence, and deſpair removes all reſtraints, this we know from experience; and the conduct of our modern Philoſophers evinces the truth: in deſpair theſe unfortunate men give themſelves up to all ſorts of uncleanneſs.

That God is infinitely good we know, and conſequently that he can forgive offences, but we know alſo that it is not conſiſtent with goodneſs to encourage evil by impunity: we know that the divine goodneſs does not exclude the divine juſtice: that juſtice muſt be ſatisfied, and what are the conditions we cannot know but from revelation. The conditions, on which a capital offence is forgiven, muſt be known but from the injured party, not preſumed by the offender.

If it be aſked why a more explicit revelation was made at the time of Moſes? A reaſon may be aſſigned; it was then more neceſſary to check the progreſs of idolatry,

idolatry, which the pride and licentiouſneſs of man had authoriſed to an intolerable exceſs, and though this revelation, or rather the ceremonial law inſtituted by it, was confined to the deſcendants of Jacob, the prodigies attending this revelation were known to all ſurrounding nations, and ſufficient to ſhew the weakneſs and vanity of the Heathen idols, and the ſhameleſs blindneſs of theſe, who ſacrifice to, or confide in them.

To enquire why this revelation was made to the deſcendants of Jacob, and not to other nations, is uſeleſs : ſuch a preference depends on the abſolute will of God, whoſe diſtribution of gratuitous favors to ſome is an effect of goodneſs not injurious to others, who have no title or claim on him. Where there are no claims there is no acceptation of perſons. An enquiry might be inſtituted with equal propriety why he created the angel ſuperior to man, or man to the mouſe.

The law eſtabliſhed by the miniſtry of Moſes was an extraordinary favor to the Jews, becauſe it explicitly pointed out all the great principles of the natural law, it was therefore a ſimple and infallible rule of action, though theſe principles might have been known to the Heathens, they were not : prejudice, paſſion, example, intereſt and other reaſons had effaced them from their minds in a great meaſure, few, if any obſerved them ; theſe amongſt the Heathen nations, who obſerved the precepts of the natural law, were not obliged to obſerve the ceremonial precepts of the Jewiſh law : theſe precepts obliged but the Jews themſelves and proſelytes to their religion.

To this may be added, that as God always grants to every one of his creatures all that is neceſſary to the attainment of its end, if there be no impediment given, if any man remote from times or places, in which the revelation of ſupernatural truths is manifeſt, ſtrictly obſerves the

the dictates of unprejudiced reaſon, and all the precepts of the natural law, God will either enlighten his underſtanding immediately, or ſend ſome other agent to inſtruct him, as Peter was ſent to inſtruct Cornelius.

The experience of ages ſhews that even men of extraordinary abilities, and intenſe ſtudy, though knowing the moſt common principles of the natural law, have been ſubject to the moſt groſs errors in remote conſequences, and in the application of firſt principles, if then, reaſon be inſufficient to direct the learned few, a ſupplement is indiſpenſably neceſſary for the bulk of mankind, this ſupplement, which perfects reaſon, is the infallible authority of revelation.

That a law founded on revelation has been announced, is a fact, which is not ſubject either to mathematical, or metaphyſical demonſtration, nor is it an intuitive truth, which is evident on the expoſition, it is known, as all other facts are known, by moral evidence, that is, by the teſtimony of unexceptionable witneſſes corroborated by circumſtances. Whether a truth founded on moral evidence be more certain than that which is founded on metaphyſical reaſoning is left to Logicians to decide; but it muſt be admitted that to deny the one is more dangerous and detrimental to ſociety than the other: thus for inſtance, in England a man may, with impunity, deny the ſpirituality of the ſoul, but if he were to deny that George the Third is King, it might procure him a halter. The former is a truth founded on metaphyſical reaſoning, the latter on mere moral evidence, the internal evidence of revelation as it is called by ſome, or perhaps more properly by others, corroborating evidence, is taken from the nature of the doctrine conſidered in itſelf; in it are truths, which man's imagination could not diſcover, truths which mortify his pride, contradict his moſt violent inclinations, teach him to ſubdue his paſſions, to eradi-

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cate the ſpirit of ſelf-love and private intereſt, inculcate the indiſpenſable neceſſity of univerſal benevolence without diſtinction of friends or enemies. In a word, truths which condemn every poſſible vice, even in thought, and enforce every virtue; ſuch doctrine and the plan of religion formed on it, atteſts the divinity of its author.

The external evidence of revelation is taken from theſe ſtupendous effects of divine power, called miracles, and of the divine preſcience called prophecies. By a miracle is underſtood an effect of omnipotence, to which no inferior power is competent; a work tranſcending the eſtabliſhed order of nature, which no ſecondary cauſe can produce, but as an inſtrument. Effects ſurpaſſing the power of man, but not that of angels, whether good, or bad, are ſaid to be admirable but not miraculous. By the ſuperior intelligence and activity of the agent, effects are produced, which excite admiration, though they do not tranſcend the eſtabliſhed laws, theſe may be conſidered as the productions of art.

An effect may ſurpaſs the mechanical powers, or the known eſtabliſhed laws of nature, either conſidered in itſelf, as if two bodies were to occupy the ſame place, the Sun to retrogade, or in the ſubject, in which the effect is produced, as the reſurrection of the dead, or the illumination of the blind, or in the manner of production, as if a fever be inſtantaneouſly removed, which by the powers of nature might be removed in the courſe of time.

That God may produce miraculous effects is inconteſtibly true: for ſince all the ſeveral Beings, which compoſe the univerſe, have been created by him, the nature of each different ſpecies is eſtabliſhed by his will, its powers of producing effects confined within certain limits, may be extended by that omnipotent

will which grants them, or reſtrained without being deſtroyed. By ſuch an extenſion of power or reſtraint an effect tranſcending the order of the particular nature of that cauſe may be produced, as when Sampſon pulled down the temple of Dagon, or the fire did not affect Sidrach, Miſach and Abednego in the furnace. Theſe effects, inconſiſtent with the nature of theſe particular cauſes as known to us, are perfectly conſiſtent with univerſal nature, for there is nothing more natural than for an artiſt at times to make uſe of an inſtrument according to his will, and for an omnipotent artiſt to produce any effect by any inſtrument, or to produce the effect immediately without any inſtrument at all.

We have already ſhewn that the creation of this world was an effect of choice ; that God was under no neceſſity either externally or internally to create, that he might have created this or any other, or no world at all ; the world depends on him, not he on the world, hence the order of all cauſes and effects depends on his abſolute will. To pretend that God may not produce an effect without the interference of any ſecondary cauſe, or that he cannot increaſe, or diminiſh the powers of ſecondary cauſes, is to make God dependent on his creatures not them on him, which would be an inverſion of all order. Hence it follows that no created agent, however great its power, can produce a miraculous effect : the agent cannot exceed the limits of its power ; all effects therefore, which it produces, muſt be according to the order of its nature. The powers of the angelical nature are ſuperior to the powers of human nature : powers of agency are correſpondent to the nature of the agent, the angelical nature is ſuperior to human nature, in which the ſoul is embarraſſed in its operations by a dependance on the body, hence an Angel, either of light, or darkneſs, from its ſuperior intelligence,

intelligence, and the rapidity of its motion, in the application of active to paſſive principles, may produce an effect which excites admiration, becauſe it is unuſual, but ſuch an effect muſt be produced according to theſe mechanical laws, by which the material world is governed. Thus, according to the law of gravitation a ſtone deſcends, a man, from his locomotive powers, will cauſe it to aſcend ; but as his powers are confined within certain limits his action is confined to ſtones of a certain magnitude, and the aſcent to a certain height ; an inviſible agent of greater powers will cauſe a ſtone of greater magnitude to aſcend to a greater height, or keep it ſuſpended in the air ; ſuch an effect muſt excite admiration, yet in this there is nothing miraculous becauſe the effect is correſpondent to the power of the agent, according to the eſtabliſhed laws, but no extenſion of man's power, or of any created agent, can animate a dead body, becauſe this tranſcends the eſtabliſhed order of things. The reſurrection of a dead body is manifeſtly miraculous.

A miraculous deviation from the eſtabliſhed order of nature in particular cauſes, argues no change in God's decrees, becauſe all theſe deviations have been foreſeen, and pre-ordered, in the general plan of Providence ; there is nothing more common, than deviations cauſed by the interference of ſecondary cauſes, yet all theſe are under the direction of that Providence, which ſuperintends the whole.

In vain does the Deiſt pretend that we do not know all the powers of mechanical cauſes ; that we cannot diſtinguiſh a miraculous effect from that, which is produced by ſome mechanical cauſe ; we ſee wonderful effects produced by chemical operations, ſay they, it is true we do not know all the powers of mechanical cauſes, nor the effects, which one body produces on the other, in virtue of the laws of gravitation, of attraction,

traction, of election or repulsion, nor is it necessary that we should, but we know that no mechanical law can produce life in a dead body, or enable a man to walk on the seas as on dry land, to command the winds, because these effects are contrary to the mechanical laws, and powers, which are known, and these, which we do not know, are not contrary to these, which we do know. It is not therefore so difficult to distinguish a miraculous effect from a production of art.

At least, say they, the power of spiritual agents escapes our knowledge, yes, but we know their powers are confined within certain limits, and in a certain order: for no agent can act on any subject, not subject to its action, nor suspend the laws established by a superior power, hence no spiritual created agent can effect a miracle. The reason, why increated power effects miracles, is, because all nature is subject to, and dependent on it, and that all particular causes are but its instruments; as to the miracles which were pretended to be wrought amongst the Heathens it is sufficient to say that, the authors, from whom we learn these pretended miracles, did not believe them; Livy relates some, but he says in the preface of his work, "that he was not disposed either to affirm or refute, "what was said to happen, either before, or at the "building of the city, and which was rather adorned "by poetical fables, than authentic monuments of fact." "It is pardonable," says he, "in antiquity, to admit "some things divine, thereby to render the foundation "of their cities more venerable, and no more pardonable "than in the Roman people." In the 24th B. and 12th C. he says, "many prodigies were published this "year and the more the simple and credulous peo-"ple believed them, the more they were increased." In the 24th C. he says, "that the Consuls having raised

"two

" two city legions, and filled up the other legions, did " not move from the city until they had procured pro- " digies." Theſe pretended prodigies were therefore, in the opinion of the authors who relate them, intended to encourage the ſoldiers, or ſecure the approbation of an ignorant and ſuperſtitious populace.

Valerius Maximus, in his 1ſt. B. having related many pretended miracles, adds, that " as theſe were not late " tranſactions, but depending on hearſay tradition, let " the authors vouch for them." *Fidem auctoris vindicent.* Suetonius, in the life of Claudius, ſays of theſe miracles, " I have related them not that I believe them true, " or veriſimilar." And Pauſanius, in the 6th B. ſays, " I have related, what the Greeks have circulated, but " nothing obliges me to believe them."

It was currently reported that great cures were performed in the temple of Æſculapius, and inſcriptions expreſſive of theſe miraculous cures on brazen tablets were hung up to commemorate the events. The artifices of the officers of all the Heathen temples to impoſe on a ſuperſtitious people are well known, the officers attendant on the temple of Æſculapius were phyſicians, and performed cures, as our phyſicians do, but with greater ceremony and myſtery, the effects of their medicines aſcribed to the pretended God, and certain perſons hired to pretend indiſpoſitions, which were inſtantaneouſly cured, rendered the temple famous, and increaſed the concourſe of votaries and wealth of the miniſters.

Suetonius and Tacitus ſay that, Veſphaſian wrought miracles in Alexandria. A blind man directed by Serapis, and a lame man ſays Suetonius, if we believe Tacitus he was not lame but maimed of an arm, that is a trifling difference, were inſtantly healed by that Prince. In anſwer to this it muſt be remarked that the Egyptians were extremely ſuperſtitious and conſidered Serapis as their great divinity, the crafty Prince could

could not endear himself more to them than by pretending to be a favorite of their beloved Serapis, and there was nothing more simple than to engage the ministers of Serapis, or his own ministers, to procure a counterfeit blind man to play a role, his unwillingness to undertake it was a mere artifice. The very relation of Tacitus shews it. He thought it would not succeed. Why then attempt it in public? He was told by the attendants that he was a favorite of the Gods. He knew it would succeed or he would not, and he must have known it from the actors, who knew his interest, and their own, was strengthened by the success, of which they could not doubt. Tacitus and Suetonius both agree that, these pretended miracles were intended to confirm the authority of that Prince, after his election, and that he was told by flattering courtiers that his election was pleasing to their Gods. It is true, Suetonius adds that some who were present attested the fact without hopes of reward. Undoubtedly a great majority of the people were duped as was intended by the actors. The same thing may be said of the pretended miracles of Hadrianus. Spartianus says that he cured a blind man, and woman, who were sent by the Gods to prevent him from putting himself to death. The motive shews the fraud, and Marius Maximus, as Spartianus himself says, relates it as a fiction. Marius's works are lost. To this may be added that, many things have happened amongst the Heathens, which surpass the power of man, but nothing surpassing the locomotive powers of the demons.

As to the miracles of Apollonius related by Philostratus. The whole of his composition is a tissue of absurdities, resembling our Arabian Nights' Entertainments, and deserves the same credit: he makes Apollonius understand the voice of birds and beasts, and says, that he learned that science from the Arabs, and adds other

tales

tales equally ridiculous. If any man wiſhes to know the Heathen tales and miracles let him read Ovid's Metamorphoſes which becauſe they could not happen did not happen.

Moſes ſays in the book of Exodus, that the Magicians in Egypt caſt their rods in preſence of Pharoah as Aaron did, and that there were ſerpents. The immediate diſappearance of the rods, and the ſubſtitution of ſerpents, which were numerous in Egypt, does not ſurpaſs the powers of an angel either of light or darkneſs. The converſion of a rod into a real ſerpent does. The very matter, of which the rods was compoſed, might be inſtantaneouſly ſo diſpoſed as to exhibit the appearance of a real ſerpent, and though not living it might appear in motion as an automaton, this ſeems more conſonant to Moſes's relation, becauſe he ſays that Aaron's rod devoured the rods of the Egyptians, which ſeems to indicate that the component parts of the rods remained, though the form was changed; this was not a miracle but an artificial operation. The intelligence and active powers of the demon being fully competent to ſuch an operation.

Hence appears the neceſſity of that warning, which Moſes gave the Jews, to beware of impoſtors, whoſe diabolical ſigns, ſurpaſſing the powers of human nature, might induce them to ſwerve from the obedience which they owed their God; in like manner Chriſtians were warned both by Chriſt and his apoſtle to beware of all impoſtors, more particularly that great impoſtor Anti-Chriſt, whoſe prodigies will be according to the extent of Satan's power.

It is ſaid in the book of Kings that Saul applied to the witch of Endor to raiſe Samuel by her incantations. It is true, Samuel appeared to Saul, but not by the witch's incantations, for he appeared before ſhe began them, but by the power of God, who ſent him to

propheſy

propheſy Saul's fate, and the fall of his army, and to reproach him with his diſobedience. This is evident from the whole paſſage, and is confirmed by the authority of Eccleſiaſticus who ſays that Samuel propheſied after his death. Though the demon has no power whatſoever over the ſouls, or bodies of departed ſaints; it is not inconvenient that when the demon was conſulted God himſelf ſhould give an anſwer by one of his prophets, as when the king Ochozias ſent to conſult Beelzebub, the pretended God of Accaron, the prophet Elias was ſent to meet his meſſengers and announce his death.

There are certain rules to diſtinguiſh true, from pretended miracles, which though not within the reach of the ſimple and illiterate parts of ſociety (a ſtrong prejudice againſt our innovators) are yet infallible. The firſt rule. No miracles can be wrought in proof of poſitions contradicting each other, none to invalidate truths already eſtabliſhed by divine authority, becauſe God cannot contradict himſelf, none to eſtabliſh impiety or irreligion: this is inconſiſtent with the ſanctity of God. Second rule. True miracles muſt ſurpaſs the force of mechanical cauſes. Third rule. They muſt be wrought by the invocation of the true God, and in confirmation of ſome truth propoſed by him. The moſt ſimple and at the ſame time the moſt univerſal is a happy combination of circumſtances: if it be manifeſt that the fact has happened; that it ſurpaſſes the known powers of natural agents, and mechanical cauſes; if the inſtrumental cauſe be ſincere, incapable of deceit; if it tends to eſtabliſh piety and ſanctity of morals, and to glorify God; if it be analogus to previous miracles and tending to the ſame end, if it ſuſtains the critical examination of intelligent men. A fact accompanied by all theſe circumſtances is manifeſtly ſupernatural and miraculous. It excites and confirms our belief of revealed

vealed truths: for as by natural effects we arrive at the knowledge of natural truths, so by supernatural effects, we attain a knowledge of supernatural truths. That miracles have been wrought in confirmation of revealed religion is evident from this circumstance, that in revealed religion there are many supernatural truths, as the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, which could not be imposed on the credulity of the world but by supernatural means: to believe these, and other, truths of revealed religion, we must believe that miracles were wrought in confirmation of these truths, which are themselves miraculous, and to believe all this without any miracle would be of all miracles the greatest. But, says the Deist, Christians now see no miracles, and yet they believe all these truths. It is true they see no miracles in themselves, but they see them in their effects; and the Deist must be miserably blind, if he does not see them also: for there is no effect without a cause, and to pretend that so many nations renounced the Heathen superstitions, which flattered all their passions, to embrace a religion severe in its maxims, full of restraints, contradicting all the inclinations of man, and in which there are so many mysterious and miraculous truths proposed, without having seen a miracle at all, is to believe a most extraordinary effect without any cause.

Miracles may be wrought by vicious men in confirmation of truth, not in confirmation of that sanctity, which they do not possess: for though faith not animated by charity be dead, it may yet be an instrument to a living power to produce any effect, as a man makes use of an axe. God may therefore confirm truths of faith at the invocation of a vicious man, but not that sanctity which the man has not, because God cannot attest a falshood.

In reply to a number of impertinent questions such

as theſe : why ſhould God ſuſpend the phyſical laws which he has eſtabliſhed ? Why work great miracles upon trifling occaſions without a great neceſſity ? Why ſo many repeated miracles to eſtabliſh the ſame truth, as in the caſe of Balaam, of Gideon, of Elias, of Eliſha, of Ezechias ? It muſt be obſerved that God in the creation of the world could have no other object in view, but the manifeſtation of his power, his wiſdom, his goodneſs, &c. to intelligent Beings from whom, he could exact his tribute of glory ; that matter in this viſible world is incapable of good or evil, of pleaſure or pain, of perfection or imperfection : the poliſhed diamond derives its value from uſe or fancy : in itſelf it is inert matter, as is the unpoliſhed pebble. The earth, the ſea, the ſun, the moon, all the Heavenly bodies, compoſed of matter are incapable of contemplating any of God's works, or paying him any tribute of glory ; they muſt therefore have been created for intelligent Beings, as a mean to attain the end which God had in view in the creation of the whole ; the abſolute and relative poſition of all theſe bodies, and the mechanical laws, to which they are ſubſervient, muſt have been eſtabliſhed for the ſame end, hence if the perfection of many, or even of one intelligent Being, required a deviation from one or more of theſe laws, it was perfectly conſiſtent with the original plan of the Creator to pre-diſpoſe ſuch deviation for the ſtated time. Why ſo ? Becauſe one intelligent Being is ſuperior to the whole maſs of inanimate matter, and all the claſſes of irrational creatures. And ſince the perfection of intelligent Beings conſiſts in moral rectitude, and intellectual excellence, if this end be not attainable but by a deviation from accuſtomed phyſical laws, the deviation muſt have been predíſpoſed in the plan of the Creator. That miracle appears great to us, which far ſurpaſſes the power of viſible

viſible agents, to almighty power all miracles are equal: no miracle is great when omnipotence is the agent; to open the Red Sea, to ſuſpend the motion of the earth or moon, to raiſe the dead, to exterminate all the inhabitants of the earth by water, or fire, is not an effort of power for him, who by an act of his will gave exiſtence to all the Beings, which compoſe the univerſe.

The effect of repeated miracles at the inſtance of Gideon, of miracles, which God wrought for the immediate relief of his ſervants, as the feeding of Elias by a raven in the wilderneſs, the cauſing the borrowed axe to ſwim, at the prayer of Eliſha, of the ſign given to Ezechias, of the many miracles in favor of Tobias, Daniel and others, was not confined to them: there have been, are, and will be millions, who believing theſe miracles, praiſe and glorify a God ſo bountiful, ſo condeſcending, ſo attentive to the wants of his ſervants. If the Atheiſt rejects theſe facts, as ſuppoſed, it is becauſe he does not believe the author to exiſt; if the Deiſt refuſe his aſſent it is becauſe, that God whom his corrupt life diſhonors, and his impious tongue blaſphemes, has in puniſhment of his crimes withdrawn the light of his underſtanding and abandoned him to a reprobate ſenſe.

The miracles related of Balaam were wrought on him, not by him, he was the ſubject, not the inſtrumental cauſe; they have the ſame tendency with the other miracles related by Moſes to eſtabliſh the truth of revealed religion, moral rectitude, intellectual excellence; the perfection of man, the great end of the creation.

Propheſy is of all proofs the moſt unequivocal, and leaſt liable to objection. That future events may be known was univerſally believed by the Heathen nations, hence their augurs and ſoothſayers were in great

repute

repute, and their oracles were religiouſly conſulted. But as all future events dependent on indetermined cauſes eſcape the knowledge of limited intelligence, their knowledge was merely conjectural, and their oracles equivocal. There is but God, whoſe infinite underſtanding ſees the order of all cauſes to their effects, and conſequently all future events in their cauſes, as alſo in themſelves, who can announce with the utmoſt certainty a future event depending on the combination of an indefinite number of free and concurring cauſes. Iſaias ſpeaking of idols ſays "tell us future events, and we ſhall know that you are Gods."

This knowledge of future events, called propheſy, conſiſts in ſome ſupernatural illumination of the mind, on which truths, to which human knowledge does not extend, are impreſſed. As truth conveyed from the teacher to the diſciple is the ſame in both, propheſy being impreſſed on the mind of the Prophet by primary truth, is infallible.

Truths remote from the knowledge of one man, though known to others, may be known by the ſpirit of propheſy; truths intelligible in themſelves, but not to the limited underſtanding of man, may alſo be known, as the myſteries of religion, and truths entirely remote from the knowledge of all creatures, becauſe they are not intelligible in themſelves, as future contingencies dependent on the free determinations of man, may be known by the ſpirit of propheſy, theſe are more properly its object.

There is no limited underſtanding which knows the order of indetermined cauſes to their effects, conſequently no limited underſtanding, which can foretel an event depending on the combination of ſuch cauſes, the ſpirit of propheſy is not therefore natural either to men or angels; but God being the firſt author of all Beings muſt know them before they have an exiſtence,

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he therefore knows all future events and he alone can foretel them.

To pretend that God cannot inſtruct the Prophet in truths, to which his underſtanding cannot naturally extend, is abſurd: there is nothing more common than to ſee one man teach another truths, of which by any exertion of his mind unaſſiſted, he never could have formed an idea, though the teacher can do no more than to convey ſome image by ſounds, or ſigns, without infuſing any light in his underſtanding, whilſt the Almighty God not only enlightens the underſtanding, but increaſes its powers of action, at the ſame time that he conveys the images.

An angel either of light, or darkneſs, from its ſuperior ſagacity, and more extenſive knowledge, combining circumſtances, may form a ſtrong conjecture of ſome future event not far diſtant, but uncertainty is eſſential to conjecture, there is but infinite ſagacity, and unlimited knowledge, which excludes conjecture.

In vain does the Deiſt think that becauſe ſome events were foretold, or rather threatened in the ſcriptures, which did not happen, as the death of Ezechias, and the deſtruction of Nineveh, that theſe were merely conjectural, and all others of the ſame nature. God ſees all future events in themſelves, as they depend on him for their futurity, and he alſo ſees the order of all cauſes to their effects, and knows whether theſe effects will be produced, or prevented by other cauſes. He ſaw that the diſpoſition of Ezechias's body was tending to a diſſolution, this truth he impreſſed on the mind of the Prophet, he ſaw at the ſame time, that in conſequence of Ezechias's prayer, his death would be poſtponed for fifteen years, this he did not at that time communicate, he did after; the ſame reaſoning is applicable to all menaces in the ſcripture: they

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are all conditional, whether the condition be expreſſed or implied. The crimes of Nineveh deſerved the deſtruction of the city, the penance of its inhabitants ſaved it. The Ninevites underſtood the propheſy in its true ſenſe as a menace.

It is true, in many propheſies of the Old Teſtament there is great obſcurity, and in ſome, ſeeming contradictions, more particularly theſe which regard the Meſſias, whoſe power and glory is announced in ſtrong imagery, and whoſe humiliations and ſufferings is related in the moſt pathetic manner. Power, majeſty, and glory, humiliations, ſufferings and death, muſt have appeared to the Jews inconſiſtent in the ſame perſon, and would have been ſo in fact, if in one perſon the Meſſias had not united the divine and human nature. Another cauſe of obſcurity was that, at the ſame time, events ages diſtant, one from the other, were foretold, as if they were to happen at the ſame time: thus the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the conſummation of the world ſeem confounded. Many things are ſaid of Antiochus, which are applicable to Anti-Chriſt, of whom that tyrant was an image, or, if you will, a figure; moreover the total ruin and deſtruction of the Jewiſh nation, their rejection and the aſſumption of the Heathen nations was foretold, obſcurity was indiſpenſably neceſſary, or they would have not only murdered the Prophets as they did, but alſo deſtroyed the ſcriptures. However there are in the Old Teſtament many propheſies as intelligible as language can make them.

By propheſy, as by miracles, our faith is confirmed: it is natural to man to reaſon from effects to cauſes, if the effect be ſupernatural, the cauſe muſt be ſo too, otherwiſe it might be ſaid that a natural cauſe had produced a ſupernatural effect, which is abſurd in the extreme. Propheſy is manifeſtly ſupernatural; to foretel a future event at a diſtant period of time, reſulting

ing from different combinations of an indefinite number of free and concurring cauſes, ſurpaſſes all the powers of nature.

Propheſy is more effectual to confirm the truth of revelation than miracles. Why ſo? Becauſe a miracle is but a momentary ſuſpenſion of the eſtabliſhed order, and may be eluded by aſcribing it to magic, or ſome occult cauſes, but propheſy is permanent and can be aſcribed to no power inferior to the divine. Hence that invincible argument of the apologiſts of the Chriſtian religion againſt the Heathen philoſophers, who admitting the miracles of Chriſt and his apoſtles upon incontrovertible evidence, aſcribed them to the powers of Satan. Was Chriſt, ſaid the apologiſts, a magician before he was born, to foretel all the circumſtances of his life, or was it in the power of a magician to foretel what has happened ſince his death? To the evidence of this argument there is no reply, nor can the force of it be eluded.

To determine, ſays the Deiſt, if any religion be founded on revelation, it is neceſſary to examine minutely the tenets of all the different religions, which contradict each other, and pretend to miracles, ſuch an examination requires a length of time, intenſe ſtudy, a knowledge of many, if not all different languages, an intimate acquaintance with the inhabitants of all different countries, a toil of which few, if any, are capable, and to which none will ſubmit. This argument is inconteſtible againſt the Deiſt, who believes nothing but on the teſtimony of his eyes, or ears, ſo far from having any force againſt the Chriſtian it goes directly to ſhew the neceſſity of revelation; ſince reaſon unaſſiſted by it, is incapable of conducting a man to his laſt end. It is not neceſſary for the Chriſtian to inſtitute this examination, or to wander through different nations: the truths of revealed religion are found in that

that revelation, and that they have been revealed is a fact, of which there is moral evidence capable of convincing any man, who reasons; that there can be no contrary revelation is evident from this simple principle, that God cannot contradict himself, it is useless to visit foreign countries to know if that does exist, which cannot exist, he might as well enquire if bread which nourishes in his own country, poisons elsewhere, or if dogs which run in England fly in Spain.

It is not inconvenient that the prophetic spirit as well as the power of working miracles may be sometimes given to the vicious: both the one and the other being intended for the public good, and a man however vicious may be an instrument to serve others as a charitable master gives alms by the ministry of an impious servant. Sensuality seems inconsistent with the spirit of prophesy: because it absorbs the mind, and renders it subservient to the flesh, other vices of a spiritual nature, as ambition, vain glory, &c. are not so opposite.

If the spirit of prophesy be intended to illustrate the understanding of the Prophet, as also to inform the public it does not rest on immoral characters: habitual grace, which is not granted to immoral men, enlightens the understanding; actual graces only excite and are transitory.

We come now to enquire, if any revelation be contained in the books of the Old Testament? If the motives of credibility be sufficient to induce a well-founded belief, that a revelation was made; and that this revelation is in the whole, or in part, contained in the books of the Old Testament? Whether the truths revealed be consistent with our notions, or surpass the powers of our understanding, is useless to enquire: because there are two truths evident to the meanest capacity: that God can neither deceive, nor be deceived is one; and that,

that, in the range of infinity, there are numberleſs truths, to which the human mind cannot extend is another; any one therefore of theſe truths may be revealed by God, who perfectly knows them all. In a word, the leaſt homage we can pay the almighty power of God is, to admit that he can do, what we cannot conceive. It is the ſummit of pride, to pretend to bound the power of God by our conceptions.

That there did exiſt ſome ages ago a nation of Jews is univerſally admitted; that the nation poſſeſſed books, which they believed to be written by men inſpired is equally certain; they yet exiſt and they yet believe their ſcriptures divinely inſpired, though theſe very ſcriptures contain the moſt ſevere ſtrictures on the conduct of their anceſtors, and the moſt dreadful menaces againſt themſelves. In theſe ſcriptures are contained the moſt ſublime ideas of the Divinity, and of all the attributes of the Deity known to us; they alſo contain rules of moral conduct ſuperior to all that the Heathen philoſophers imagined: in conduct theſe philoſophers reſembled their children of the preſent day, they were more reſerved in their writings. This Jewiſh nation firmly believed that their anceſtors had been for ſome centuries in aſtate of ſlavery in Egypt; that Moſes had been expreſsly ſent to deliver them from their captivity; and the very laws delivered by Moſes were the public laws of the nation, all cauſes civil, criminal, religious and matrimonial, were decided according to theſe laws.

This law of Moſes, or, if you will, the books in which it is contained, have ſuch internal marks of the divinity of its origin, that there is but the moſt blind ſtupidity, or perverſe obſtinacy, that can reſiſt them. Language cannot afford terms more ſtrong than theſe, by which he expreſſes the eternity, the wiſdom, the power, the immutability, the independence and the ſelf-

exiſtence of the Divinity, *Jehova* ſignifying a Being which poſſeſſes independent exiſtence, the incommunicable name of God. *Elohim* indicates his judicial power and the ſovereignty of his Being. *El* conveys a particular idea of the power of God. *El Sabaoth* the God of armies on whom the event of battles depends. *El Sadi* the all-powerful Being. The truth the juſtice the ſanctity of God in theſe terms of Deut. 32. C. 4. v, " God's works are perfect, all his ways are judgments : God is faithful without any iniquity, juſt, and upright." The unity, the power, the providence of God in theſe terms. V. 19, " See that I am alone, and there is no other God beſide me : I will kill, and enliven, I will ſtrike and I will heal, and there is none who can reſt out of my hand." In the original tex, *I, I am he*, there is no God with me. *Ani ani hou ve ein elohim imadi.*

In this law, the moſt pious, the moſt tender ſentiments of devotion are inculcated, the fear of a God the avenger of crimes ; the reverence due to Sovereign Majeſty ; the boundleſs confidence to be placed in the power and goodneſs of God are propoſed in expreſſive terms. Deut. 6. C. 5 v, " Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole ſoul, and with thy whole ſtrength. Theſe things, which I now command, will be in your heart, and you will tell them to your children, you will meditate on them ſitting in your houſe, and walking in the way, lying and riſing." And Deut. 10. C. 12. v, " And now, O Iſrael, what is it that the Lord your God requires of you, but that you ſhould fear the Lord your God and walk in his ways, that you ſhould love him, and ſerve the Lord your God, with your whole heart and ſoul ; that you ſhould obſerve the precepts of the Lord and his ceremonies, which I this day command you, that it may be well with you ..... Do not harden your necks

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more : becauſe the Lord your God is the God of Gods and the Lord of Lords, a God great, and powerful, and terrible, he accepts neither perſons nor gifts ..... The Lord your God you ſhall fear, and him alone ſhall you ſerve..... He is your praiſe and your God, who has done for you theſe great and terrible things, which your eyes have ſeen." The 32 C. 3. v, " Give Glory to your God. God's works are perfect and all his ways are judgments."

In this law, the moſt ſublime perfection of man is recommended and ſtrictly enjoined. Deut. 18. C. 13. v, " You ſhall be perfect and ſpotleſs with the Lord your God." And, Levi. 19. C. 2. v, " Be you holy becauſe I am holy, the Lord your God."

In the external rites and ſacrifices, which were ordered, the greateſt purity both of ſoul and body was ſtrictly enforced ; all ſuperſtitious rites, and ſacrifices to idols, forbidden under the moſt ſevere penalties.

The moral precepts of that law enforce every ſocial virtue and prohibit every vice : " Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf." This precept is frequently repeated in the law of Moſes. Exod. 20. C. 17. v, " Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's houſe, thou ſhalt not deſire his wife, nor his ſervant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his aſs, nor any thing which is his." Moſes did not confine himſelf to theſe general precepts, but to obviate theſe difficulties, and prevent falſe interpretations, he deſcends to the moſt minute particulars. Levit. 19. C, " Let every one fear his father and his mother. ..... When you reap your ſtanding corn you will not cut to the very ſurface of the earth, nor will you collect the remaining ears, nor will you collect the bunches, which remain in your vineyard, nor the grains which fall, you will leave them for the poor and for ſtrangers. I am the Lord your God ; you will not ſteal, you will not lie, you will not deceive your neighbour.

neighbour. . . . . You will not calumniate your neighbour, nor oppreſs him. The labour of the mercenary will not remain with you until morning. You will not curſe the deaf, nor place a ſtumbling block before the blind. You will not do what is injuſt, nor will you judge againſt equity, you will not conſider the perſon of the poor, nor honor the countenance of the rich. You will judge juſtly. You will not be an informer nor tale bearer amongſt the people. You will not ſtand againſt the blood of your neighbour. You will not hate your brother in your heart, but publicly reprimand him. You will not ſeek revenge nor will you be mindful of an injury from your fellow-citizens, you ſhall love your friend as yourſelf, I am the Lord." Again in the book of Deut. C. 22. v. 1, and ſeq. "You will not ſee your brother's ox or his ſheep ſtraying and paſs it by, but you will bring it back to your brother; if your brother be not near, and that you do not know him, you will bring them to your houſe, and they will remain with you, whilſt your brother ſeeks them, and he will receive them. You will do ſo with his aſs, with his garment, with every thing, which your brother may loſe, if you find it, you will not neglect it, as if not pertaining to you. If you ſee your brother's aſs or ox fall in the way, you will not paſs by, but aſſiſt him to lift it." . . . . .

Is this the language of an impoſtor? What man, who has any remains of reaſon, can think him an impoſtor, who thus enforces the fear, the love, the reverence of Sovereign Majeſty, and all the virtues, which make man great and good? Such an impoſtor would be a more extraordinary character than Moſes himſelf.

The writer paſſes unnoticed the errors of all the Heathen philoſophers, and the abſurdities of the different ſyſtems of religion, which prevailed, and continue to prevail in all theſe unfortunate countries, which

which revelation has not enlightened, or which have perverted revelation to their own deſtruction.

Moſes deſcribes the creation in the moſt ſimple and ſatisfactory manner: "in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth." He then proceeds to relate the formation of certain parts, as the ſun, the ſtars, the formation of the firſt man and his aſſiſtant the firſt woman in a moſt beautiful garden. Their diſobedience to the precept of the Creator and the fatal conſequences of that diſobedience to them, and all their poſterity.

As the angels make a part of the univerſe, not a ſeparate univerſe, they were created at the ſame time with the material world. The ruin of ſome we know from revelation; and the perſeverance of others in their obedience and conſequent exaltation to glory. Why that angel of darkneſs called Satan, the adverſary, was permitted to tempt our firſt parents is a ſecret known to God, not to us, why in particular that diſobedient Spirit was permitted to make the ſerpent the inſtrument of his malice is equally unknown to us; the fact we know, and its effects we feel.

It has been aſſerted by ſome, that the immortality of the ſoul was not known to the Jews before the captivity of Babylon, becauſe Moſes does not ſpeak of an after life. Never was aſſertion more groundleſs: Moſes might have paſſed it unnoticed as a truth publicly known by all. It is not neceſſay to tell a man it is day, when he ſees the ſun ſhine. Yet he did not: God ſays to him, I am the God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Jacob. Theſe patriarchs were therefore in exiſtence, for he is not the God of non-exiſting Beings; not their bodies: they were crumbled to aſhes, and, if entire, God would not have called himſelf the God of the dead, their ſouls therefore muſt have been living. And when the patriarch Jacob was told that his ſon Joſeph

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was devoured by a wild beaſt, " I will," ſaid he, " deſcend to him with ſorrow." *Sheolah.* That is to the peace of ſouls. *Queber* in that language ſignifies a grave, in which he could not think that Joſeph's body was laid, as he thought him devoured by a wild beaſt. And what ſignifies that ſentence ſo often repeated at the deaths of the patriarchs : " He was gathered to his fathers?" Can it imply any thing elſe but that their ſouls were all collected, their bodies certainly were not : Abraham was buried in Ephron's field in the land of Canaan and his anceſtors in Chaldea.

It is true Moſes propoſed temporal rewards and puniſhments to ſanction the law. Theſe were better proportioned to the obſtinate, and perverſe diſpoſition of a great majority of the Jews, as in ſpeculative truths the means of demonſtration ought always to be proportioned to the underſtanding of the learner. Moreover the Jewiſh law was but preparatory to the Chriſtian law, which was to give it its ultimate perfection, and in which rewards and puniſhments are propoſed proportioned to its perfection, that is, Eternal. In all the books of the Old Teſtament the immortality of the ſoul is ſuppoſed as a truth, of which there was no doubt. It is ſaid that Eſau's wife afflicted the ſpirit, *Rouach* of Iſaac and Rebecca. Saul deſires that Samuel might appear to him. The prophets ſpeak of the happineſs which the juſt will enjoy in a future life and the torments of the wicked. In a word, to pretend that the Jews did not believe a future life argues an intolerable ignorance of their hiſtory. The aſſertion deſerves contempt not a ſerious refutation.

From the order which Abraham received to ſacrifice his ſon Iſaac and the actual ſacrifice of Jephta's daughter ; as alſo of the death of Agag by the hands of Samuel in preſence of the Lord, it would ſeem that human ſacrifices were authoriſed by the law, more particularly

cularly, as it is ſaid in Levit. 27. C. 28. and 29. v, That whatever is conſecrated to the Lord, whether man, animal or field, ſhall not be redeemed..... That every thing ſo conſecrated ſhall die. Notwithſtanding theſe ſeeming difficulties there is nothing ſo ſtrictly prohibited in the law as human ſacrifices. Deut. 12. C. 30. v. and ſeq. " Take care not to imitate them (the Canaanites) " they have committed all the abominations which the Lord deteſts, offering their ſons and their daughters to their Gods, and burning them with fire.

With reſpect to Abraham, his obedience, by an immediate compliance with a precept ſo difficult, was made known to the world, and his faith : " for he hoped even againſt hope," ſays the apoſtle to the Hebrews " knowing that God was able to raiſe from the dead." Theſe his virtues are propoſed as models, and the ſacrifice of his ſon was not permitted.

Jephta's vow was indiſcreet, and precipitate, and the obſervance of it, if he in reality put his daughter to death, which ſeems extremely probable, a deteſtable act. It is thought by ſome that he only condemned her to perpetual celibacy, which in them times was an uncommon ſacrifice. Be that as it will, the ſcripture relates the fact, as it does the murder of Uriah after the ſeduction of his wife, the ſcandalous multiplication of Solomon's wives and concubines, and ſeveral other facts, which it ſometimes ſeverely cenſures, but never approves, though the authors are for other reaſons highly approved.

Samuel put Agag to death, whether by his own hand, or the hands of others is uſeleſs to enquire : he was ordered by Agag's natural Judge, who had juſtly condemned him : he did not ſacrifice him for Samuel was not one of the prieſtly tribe ; but as that tyrant's ſword had made many a childleſs widow he put him to death in an exemplary manner. In

In the 27. C. of Levi. there is a diſtinction made between things which were offered to God according to the mode of devoting them. If they were offered by a ſimple vow *Neder*, they were redeemable, if by an abſolute conſecration *cherem* they could not be redeemed. Animals uſed in ſacrifice were ſacrificed without redemption, others were confined to the ſervice of the temple, men thus conſecrated were conſidered as dead in the ſame manner that houſes and lands were, becauſe the men could never be ſet at liberty, nor the houſes or lands return to their former proprietors. In our law language they were in mortmain.

It has been ſtated by ſome writers that the Iſraelites were guilty of an act of injuſtice in borrowing gold and ſilver veſſels and other things from the Egyptians on the eve of their departure. It might be ſaid with equal propriety, that the creditor, who by ſentence of a Court, takes a debtor's moveables in payment of a juſt demand is guilty of injuſtice: the children of Jacob had been reduced to a ſtate of ſlavery without cauſe; obliged to labour without reward, and all the fruits of their labours were taken by the Egyptians; God, the natural Judge of both nations, had ordered payment in that manner. The ſentence was perfectly juſt, and the execution free from blame; God as Sovereign Lord and diſpoſer of all things might have transferred the right of property from the Egyptians to the Iſraelites, and his order is the beſt of all poſſible titles.

The ſublime morality of the old law ſhews the divinity of its author. In the ceremonial law there is nothing reprehenſible: it was adapted to the natural diſpoſition of the people. They were extremely prone to idolatry at all times. When Moſes delayed a few days on the mountain, they made a molten calf, the idol which

which the Egyptians adored, and resolved to return to Egypt under its protection. Exodus 32. C. 1 v, "Rise, said they, to Aaron, make us Gods to conduct us." ..... And on the borders of Canaan they formed the same project. Numbers 14. C. 3. v, "Is it not better to return to Egypt?" V. 4, "They said one to the other let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt." In the land of Canaan they were always addicted to idolatry: Joshua when dying reproached them with it. Joshua 24. C. 14. v, "Now therefore fear the Lord and take away the Gods, which your fathers served in Mesopotamia and Egypt." It is manifest from the prophet Ezechial, C. 20. that a strong propensity to idolatry always subsisted amongst the Jews, v. 31, "You are defiled in all your idols until this day." The ceremonial law was well calculated to check this propensity. In this law were marked with the greatest accuracy the sacrifices, by which they were to acknowledge the supreme dominion of God over all his creatures, and their entire dependence on him; the tabernacle and sacred vessels solely appropriated to the divine worship, were capable of inspiring a due respect and veneration for the Divinity, and their different sacraments, by which they themselves were consecrated to the services of God, and their priests in a particular manner, as the public ministers of the established worship, were well adapted to excite and support the spirit of piety and devotion. And from this consecration to the service of the Divinity, it was necessary that in their manners and customs they should be distinguished from the Heathen nations, amongst whom they were at times obliged to live, hence the distinction between clean and unclean animals in their food, and some other things in their dress. As to their sacrifices, no religion either true or false can exist without a sacrifice: it is that act of re-

ligion by which a man offering to his God, a part of his poſſeſſions, publicly acknowledges by this oblation, that he himſelf and all that he poſſeſſes is from God ; that God is his firſt principle and laſt end Add to this that the ſacrifices ordered in the old law were figurative of the great ſacrifice of the new law, and from their variety and multiplicity they ſerved as barriers againſt the many different ſpecies of idolatry, and ſuperſtition, to which that people was addicted. It is true that in many of the ceremonial precepts of the old law, the reaſon on which the precept is founded, does not immediately appear, becauſe the ceremony itſelf may have but a figurative ſignification and conſequently is not founded on any immediate reaſon in itſelf. This is the great advantage of the new law, that all its precepts are rational, and that the reaſon of the precepts immediately appears. Hence St. Paul to the Romans, 12. C. 1. v, calls our obedience rational. And St. Peter, 1. Epiſt. C. 2. v. 2, ſays, " Like new born children deſire rational milk," as if he had ſaid, having by your profeſſion abjured the Heathen rites, which are falſe and ſuperſtitious, and the Jewiſh ceremonies which were merely figurative, confine your thoughts and deſires to the Chriſtian law, all the precepts of which are evidently founded on reaſon.

That the Jewiſh ceremonies were eſſentially different from the Heathen rites is evident from this, that God ſtrictly forbid them to imitate the Heathen nations in their mode of worſhip. Deut. 12. C, " Take care that you do not imitate theſe nations which are ſubverted before you ; that you do not learn their ceremonies, ſaying, as theſe nations worſhipped their Gods ſo will I worſhip, you will not do ſo to the Lord your God : for all the abominations, which God hates they done for their Gods, offering their ſons and their daughters and burning them with fire. What I command,

mand, that only will you do for the Lord : you ſhall neither add nor diminiſh." And Levit. 18. C, " I am the Lord your God. You ſhall not do according to the cuſtom of the land of Egypt, in which you have dwelt, nor according to the cuſtom of the land of Canaan, into which I am going to introduce you." When therefore St. Paul ſays, Acts 13. C. v. 18, " That God ſupported the manners of the Children of Iſrael forty years in the deſart." He does not pretend that God permitted them to worſhip him, as the Heathens worſhipped their idols, but he commends the patience of God in their frequent revolts to idolatry, their continual infractions of the divine law, and their murmurs againſt himſelf and Moſes. " The houſe of Iſrael irritated me in the wilderneſs," ſaid the Lord by Ezechial, C. 20, " They did not walk in my precepts ..... and my eye ſpared them." Nor did the Apoſtle pretend, when he ſaid to the Galatians, C. 4. v. 3, " We were under the elements of the world," that the Jews had ſacrifices and ceremonies of the ſame nature with the Gentiles, but that they were under the law, which promiſed temporal rewards to obedience, and threatened diſobedience with temporal puniſhments. Whenever any ſcience is to be taught, the elements are firſt propoſed, hence the law was called by the Apoſtle a pedagogue becauſe it ſhewed the way to Chriſt. The elements of the world, under which the Jews were, may be conſidered as theſe corporal, external and figurative rites and ceremonies, as their new moons, their ſabbaths, &c. with this eſſential difference between them and the Heathens, that the Jews ſerved God under theſe elements of the world according to his orders, and the Heathens ſerved theſe elements contrary to the expreſs command of God, and the voice of reaſon.

It is not neceſſary to take a view of the judicial law of Moſes : it is univerſally admitted that there never was

a code of laws so simple, so wise, so equitable, so few in number, and which so effectually provides for every possible case. All the different relations of man are foreseen, and rules of action prescribed; for the Prince, for his Judges, for subjects, as such, as members of society, as fathers, as husbands, as friends, as enemies, as masters, as servants, as acquiring, possessing, and disposing of real, or personal property; punishments are exactly proportioned to the enormity of offences, not to be inflicted but by order of the public magistrate on conviction of the criminal, no torture admitted, no confession extorted, no discretionary powers vested in the magistrate, his authority clearly defined, private revenge strictly prohibited, equal justice ordered for the stranger as the native, for the poor as the rich. Natural enemies as the Moabites and Amonites for ever excluded from the public Councils, to prevent the fatal consequences of their innate animosity, though admitted to a participation of the public worship least it should be thought that they were excluded from salvation; more friendly nations, as the Egyptians, and the Children of Esau, to be admitted not only to a share of the public worship, but into the Councils of the nation at the third generation. Marriages with idolatrous women forbidden, more particularly with the Canaanites, and others, who were obstinately attached to idolatrous superstition, and from whom the danger of seduction was greater, marriages with other strangers was allowed and indeed with all, in case they abjured idolatry and conformed to the Jewish worship.

The writer passes unnoticed the silly arguments of some modern writers, who through the vanity of appearing well versed in the scriptures, which they never read, and which if they did they cannot understand, take from the writings of men of real science certain objections, which are proposed and solved by the authors for

for the ſake of elucidation, and propoſe them to ignorant people as the fruits of their own deep reſearches. If men of ſcience ſhewed a proper contempt of ſuch ſcribblers, it might check their vanity, and though they themſelves may be incurable, it might reſtrain others from imitating them; but when a man aſſuming the title of Prelate undertakes to give an anſwer, to a low, ignorant and ſcurrillous buffoon, it ſtamps a ſort of reſpectability on the blockhead, feeds his vanity, and encourages him to continue.

We are now to enquire whether the old law w of divine inſtitution atteſted by miraculous works, that is, whether Moſes and Joſhua wrought miracles in confirmation of the truths, which they taught or not. It may not be amiſs previouſly to examine the force of theſe motives of credibility, on which opinions are founded, and alſo theſe motives, which extort the aſſent of the underſtanding.

The affections of the mind are known by the impreſſion, which reſults from them, and is abſolutely inſeparable from them: they are of two kinds: theſe which have no reference to external objects, as joy and ſadneſs, theſe are, by logicians, called paſſions; and theſe, which have an immediate reference to ſome external object, and are conveyed to the mind through the organs of ſenſe, as the impreſſion of ſounds, of colours, &c. theſe are called ſenſations. Theſe latter infallibly atteſt the ſtate of the mind, but the judgment, which is formed of the external object, in conſequence of the impreſſion on the mind, may be falſe. Thus, though a man at a diſtance may miſtake a ſheep for a dog, he cannot miſtake that the object has made an impreſſion on his mind; the miſtake lies in attributing the impreſſion to a dog which is an imaginary object, not to the ſheep which is the real object.

Truth in general conſiſts in the agreement of the attribute

tribute of any propoſition with its ſubject. Thus, in this propoſition, "*man is mortal,*" the idea of mortality, the attribute of the propoſition, is perfectly conſiſtent with the idea of man, which is the ſubject of the propoſition; and of courſe falſhood, which is the negation of truth, is manifeſt from the diſagreement of theſe ideas. Thus, this propoſition, "*a man is a horſe,*" is manifeſtly falſe, becauſe the idea of a horſe does not coincide with that of a man. Evidence conſiſts in a clear perception of the agreement of theſe ideas. That propoſition is evidently true, in which the idea of the attribute is clearly perceived to be conſiſtent with the idea of the ſubject. As this propoſition, "*God is immortal.*" And that propoſition is evidently falſe, in which the idea of the ſubject excludes that of the attribute, as this propoſition "*God is mortal,*" hence all judgments founded on evidence are infallibly true; errors are founded, not on evidence, but on the ſuppoſition of evidence: thus a man thinks a propoſition evidently true though he has not a clear perception of the ſubject or attribute of the propoſition and conſequently cannot determine whether they agree or diſagree, the aſſertion may be true, but made by him it is a mere conjectural opinion.

There are many truths, which, though not founded on evidence, are evidently credible. Thus for example, "London is a capital city." The propoſition is not evident, but it is evidently credible becauſe it is founded on the teſtimony of many witneſſes. Truths like this, which are founded on the teſtimony of man, are ſaid to have moral evidence.

Truths founded on the mechanical laws, by which the material world is governed, are ſaid to have phyſical evidence, thus, by the law of gravitation, a ſtone, if not ſupported, will fall towards the attracting centre. From the interference of either viſible, or inviſible agents, temporary ſuſpenſions of ſome mechanical laws may be effected. That

That there are bodies, and many in the material world, though not evident, is evidently credible: no man ever ſeriouſly diſbelieved it: the arguments offered by ſome writers againſt the exiſtence of bodies, only argue the vanity of the men, affecting to acquire fame by the ſingularity of their opinions. All men naturally believe that there are bodies, this judgment is the natural effect of the impreſſions on their minds through the organs of ſenſe; and as God is the author of this impreſſion, he is alſo the author of the judgment neceſſarily connected with it. To pretend that he is the author of falſhood is blaſphemy.

The certainty of any propoſition depends on its connection with the motive, which induces a belief of the propoſition: to put the propoſition beyond all doubt, the motive, which induces the belief, muſt be infallible in itſelf, and manifeſtly connected with the propoſition.

Propoſitions founded on evidence are ſaid to be metaphyſically certain.

Propoſitions founded on the mechanical laws are ſaid to be phyſically certain.

And theſe depending on the teſtimony of man are ſaid to be morally certain.

The intelligent world is ſubject to certain general laws, as the material world is, with this difference, that in the material world all the Beings, which compoſe it, are blind cauſes, and are of courſe determined to produce their effects by the prime mover; their effects in ſimilar circumſtances are invariably the ſame; they are ſaid to be under a phyſical neceſſity; intelligent cauſes have, within themſelves, a power of determination, they do not at all times act according to the whole force of agency, or power of action, which they poſſeſs, as the former do, hence, though in ſimilar circumſtances they do not always produce ſimilar effects; yet

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there are certain general rules, which they invariably obſerve, in theſe caſes they are ſaid to be under a moral neceſſity. Thus, it is morally certain that a prudent ſober man will not murder an only child; indeed it is morally certain, that he will not be guilty of murder at all; it is alſo morally certain that an upright Judge will not, at the loſs of his reputation, pronounce a ſentence manifeſtly contrary to law.

In particular caſes phyſical and moral certainty are nearly of equal force: it is phyſically certain that water in a river will not revert againſt the current, there is a diſtant poſſibility of its being compelled by an inviſible power, there is alſo a diſtant poſſibility of prudence and equity forſaking the upright Judge at that critical juncture, when he pronounces a ſentence manifeſtly iniquitous. There is no probability of either; but the latter is more improbable than the former, becauſe a momentary ſuſpenſion of any mechanical law is not inconſiſtent with any attribute of the Divinity, whereas to concur directly or indirectly to iniquity is incompatible with ſanctity. If then even in particular caſes moral certainty be of greater force than phyſical, there are certain caſes, in which the teſtimony of witneſſes totally invalidates any arguments, which may be drawn from mechanical laws, and amounts to what logicians call a metaphyſical certainty, which is abſolutely incapable of falſhood. Theſe are the caſes in which the teſtimony of witneſſes is indiſpenſably neceſſary for the ſupport of order and the eſtabliſhment of religion, this teſtimony is founded on the laws of Providence, and is warranted by the wiſdom and veracity of God, which can neither deceive nor be deceived.

That moral certainty is founded on the diſpoſition of Providence is manifeſt from this, that ſociety, of which God is the author, and governor, cannot ſubſiſt without it. By the teſtimony of witneſſes we know

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our Magiſtrates, our ſuperiors, our very parents are not otherwiſe known to us. All the different ſciences are dependent on moral certainty. The mechanic, the chymiſt, the aſtronomer, the navigator, muſt reſt his hopes on the teſtimony of others. There is no mathematical demonſtration, to which the mind of man more firmly adheres, or more readily aſſents, than to this truth, dependent on the teſtimony of witneſſes, that Quebec was taken from the French by Great-Britain. To deny this truth argues ſomething more than ſtupidity, that is a perverſe obſtinacy of the will: hence to reject truths founded on moral evidence is more abſurd, and inexcuſable, than to deny mathematical demonſtration; the latter may be the effect of mere ſtupidity, the former reſults from a depravity of heart.

Againſt a fact founded on moral evidence no metaphyſical arguments are admiſſible. This is an axiom amongſt Philoſophers, becauſe it is impoſſible that a fact ſhould happen and not happen, and it is equally impoſſible that the fact ſhould be morally certain if it did not happen, all reaſoning to the contrary is uſeleſs. Moral evidence therefore cannot be invalidated by any arguments drawn from mechanical laws: a fact cannot be ſupported by moral evidence if it has not happened; and if it has, it is ridiculous to pretend any impoſſibility. To conclude that any fact is founded on moral certainty, we muſt enquire if the fact be poſſible: nothing can induce a wiſe man to aſſent to an impoſſibility; but if neither the poſſibility nor impoſſibility of the fact be manifeſt, from the teſtimony of man we muſt conclude the poſſibility; the ſuſpicion of impoſſibility is not ſufficient to invalidate moral evidence, it only argues the weakneſs of our underſtanding. The fact muſt be related by ſeveral witneſſes, who were not themſelves deceived

nor can any motive be assigned why they should combine or conspire to deceive others. The mere suspicion of a distant possibility of deception is no argument at all. Thus in every individual there is a possibility of deception. He may deceive or he may be deceived, thence to infer that a number of witnesses may be deceived is ridiculous. It is that fallacy which Logicians call a conclusion from a particular to a general sense. As if because a soldier is not able to storm a fort, an army could not do it.

If the fact be momentous, it must be connected with other public facts, and known monuments, admitted by those, who are inimical, or, if contradicted, the variety and futility of their opposition must be shewn; finally, if the fact be of ancient date, it must be transmitted by witnesses in regular succession from the very time the fact has happened, any fact vested with these conditions is incontrovertible. To contradict it argues an insuperable fund of impudence, and to attempt by reasoning to disabuse an ignorant or impudent scribbler is folly. Thus for example, a man who under pretence that ancient facts are not so certain now as they were formerly, would deny the existence of Julius Cæsar, or Alexander the Great, would deserve a place in Bedlam, not a serious refutation. Whilst the motives of credibility continue the same, the certainty is the same, and we at this day are as well assured of the existence of Julius Cæsar as we are of the existence of Bonaparte—on the credit of witnesses we know both the one and the other.

A fact vested with the conditions which have been already marked, must be founded in truth: it cannot be the work of man to deceive the world: no man has any such power, and it is inconsistent with the Divine nature to be the author of universal deception, or even to countenance it, which must be

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the caſe, if Providence did not furniſh any means of detecting the deceit; it is true, the impreſſion made by any fact is ſtronger on the mind of the ſpectator, than on any other perſon, but the conviction on his underſtanding is equal, the impreſſion of terror, of joy, or any other paſſion, diminiſhes, but the conviction of the fact is unalterable, the impreſſions of terror excited by the cruelty of Nero is effaced, it no longer ſubſiſts; but that Nero was a ſanguinary tyrant is univerſally believed and will until the end of time.

Beſides theſe motives, which exclude a poſſibility of deception, there are many others on which opinions are reaſonably founded. The teſtimony of a man of known probity, who has no motive to deceive, is ſufficient to found a highly probable opinion of any fact. Even the opinions of men of real ſcience, where prejudice does not interfere, have great weight, and if the opinions of many coincide, they form a ſtrong probability of the truth of any aſſertion when the falſehood does not appear. In experimental philoſophy and aſtronomy the opinions of great maſters are ſometimes aſſumed, as principles; nor is any man allowed to deviate from them without aſſigning ſufficient reaſons, the ſame practice is obſerved in courts of law: former deciſions founded on the opinions of men of eminence, ſerve as precedents: the writer paſſes unnoticed theſe opinions, which the unlearned borrow from others without diſcuſſion, of which they are incapable. Theſe reſt ſolely on the authority of the firſt author. If they be inconſiſtent with the received opinions of the public, the preſumption is againſt them, the proof lies on the author, if it appear that prejudice, paſſion, precipitation or intereſt, was the ſpring, or the author's inducement to conteſt the received opinions, the preſumption againſt him amounts

mounts to positive proof. The credit given to such opinions is unwarrantable, and they who adhere to them are inexcusable.

All these judgments, which are founded on motives of probability are but opinions subject to discussion. Judgments founded on motives in themselves certain and manifestly connected with them, are not in the class of opinions, they exclude the possibility of deception, discussion may serve to illustrate but cannot invalidate them.

Having taking this cursory view of the motives which found our unerring judgments, and our opinions subject to error, the writer now proceeds to examine, whether we have motives of credibility sufficiently strong to support a reasonable and well-founded belief that the law of Moses was of Divine Authority; in other words did Moses authenticate his mission? Did he by miraculous works attest and demonstrate to the Children of Israel that he was sent by God? And have we sufficient reason to believe it? Miraculous works are known, as other facts are, by the testimony of their senses to these, who are present; and by the testimony of witnesses to all others. Thus for example, the resurrection of a dead man is known to these who are present by the testimony of their senses. They see the man dead, they feel him cold, they smell the cadaverous odour of putrefaction. The fact is unquestionable; again they see him, at the will of another, rise, they hear him speak, they feel him warm, they converse with him, they eat with him, this fact is equally incontrovertible as the former; that a man who was dead and lives again has been raised from the dead is absolutely certain; and that he could not be raised by any secondary cause, according to any mechanical law, is equally certain: for though Nature may produce life in a fœtus pre-

disposed

disposed according to the established order, it cannot produce life in a dead body, in which every disposition to life is extinct, and which is tending to putrefaction. The miracle therefore may be considered as resulting from two facts, which are natural, and these facts must be known, as all others are, by testimony.

That Moses did exist; that he conducted the children of Israel from Egypt; that he taught the ceremonies and rites of the Jewish worship; that he assumed the whole tribe of Levi as ministers of religion, and confined the office of high Priest to Aaron and his posterity exclusively, are facts of public notoriety, which the whole Jewish nation at all times believed, and which they continue to believe, and which the whole Christian world believes; no fact either ancient or modern is better established. That he wrought the most stupendous prodigies in Egypt, and during the space of forty years in the wilderness, is believed in the same manner, a particular description of these prodigies is contained in the very books, which describe the rites and ceremonies of their religion, the public laws of the land, by which all judicial proceedings were determined, the authentic records of all their rights and possessions; these books were written and published at the very time in presence of an army of six hundred and fifty thousand fighting men, and an immense body of people, who were witnesses to these prodigies, without any contradiction or suspicion of deception; these books were then given to the public ministers of religion, and to all the Elders of Israel, with an express order, that on the seventh year at the great festival of the Tabernacles, when all the people were assembled, men, women, and children, they should be read in their hearing, "that," said Moses, Deut. 31, Chap. "hearing

them

may learn and fear the Lord your God." And as it was impoſſible for Moſes to impoſe on ſuch a body of people, and perſuade them to believe that they had ſeen all the prodigies which were wrought, if they had not ſeen them ; that they had ſeen the earth open and devour Cori, Dathan and Abiron, the fire iſſue from the Tabernacle and conſume two hundred and fifty men, the accomplices of their crime, that they themſelves had been forty years in the deſert, that their cloaths were not worn, nor their ſhoes grown old ; that they did not eat bread nor drink wine nor beer: Deut. 29 Chap. 1 v. The immenſe number of copies given to the Levites and all the Elders with this order to have them read in preſence of all the people on the ſeventh year precluded every poſſibility of deception and interpolation in future.

A diſſertation on the miracles wrought by Moſes, by Joſhua, and the other Prophets, in defence of each in particular, is totally unneceſſary : they all tend to the ſame end, that is, to eſtabliſh the truths of revealed religion, to inſpire ſublime ideas of the God, whom we adore, and enforce obedience to his precepts. No contradiction, no diſcordance, though wrought at different periods of time, in different countries, and by different men, they have all the ſame tendency ; their coincidence forms a ſort of proof againſt which impiety declaims in vain.

That ſome have been deceived is admitted ; that ſome impoſtors have ſuppoſed miracles intentionally to deceive others, is equally true ; but that of all the miracles related by Moſes and the Prophets not one has been real ; that of all theſe Prophets ſo eminent for piety, not one has been ſincere ; that all the witneſſes who atteſted, and all the men of ſcience who believed them, have been impoſtors or dupes is an aſſertion, which ſurpaſſes impudence, which no man would dare

dare to make, who has any remains, not ſimply of modeſty, but even of common ſenſe or common honeſty; and if it be admitted that any one of theſe miracles was wrought, impiety falls defenceleſs: becauſe it is impoſſible that God by an immediate effect of his Almighty Power ſhould atteſt a falſehood.

But after all, ſays the Deiſt, if Pharaoh and the Egyptians ſaw the Prodigies wrought by Moſes why did they not believe them? Why did they perſiſt in refuſing to permit the Children of Iſrael to depart?

The ſpirit of intereſt blinded them; the immenſe advantages, which they obtained from the labour and induſtry of a numerous people, which they could not prevail on themſelves to renounce, whilſt there was the moſt diſtant hope or even poſſibility of retaining them. This appears from the ſupplications and promiſes to Moſes during the continuance of the public calamity, and their refuſal to perform theſe promiſes as ſoon as the calamity ceaſed. "I have ſinned," ſaid Pharaoh, "even now, the Lord is juſt; I and my people are impious; pray to the Lord that the thunder and hail may ceaſe," Exodus 9 Chap. 27 and 28 v. Yet after the ceſſation of that terrible plague, the ſpirit of intereſt inducing them to believe that it might have been ſome unuſual accident he refuſed to diſmiſs them. However after the death of the firſt born, "Pharoah calling Moſes and Aaron at night, ſays, ariſe and depart from amongſt my people, you and the Children of Iſrael; go and ſacrifice to your God as you ſay ..... and going bleſs me: the Egyptians preſſed the people to depart quickly, ſaying, we ſhall all die." Chap. 12, v. 31, yet ſo great was the obſtinacy of Pharaoh and his people, and ſuch the blindneſs of underſtanding produced by the ſpirit of intereſt and deſire of domination, that notwithſtanding all the calamities they had endured, when they ſaw the Children

dren of Iſrael on their way, to return no more, they regretted the permiſſion which had been extorted from them. " The King of the Egyptians was told that the people fled, and Pharaoh's heart and the heart of his ſervants was changed, and they ſaid: what have we done to diſmiſs the Children of Iſrael from ſerving us ?" Exodus 14th Chap. 5th v.

The obſtinacy of the Egyptians was not greater than that of our modern Deiſts, who, though they do not ſee theſe prodigies in themſelves, as the Egyptians did, ſee them in their effects, with an additional prodigy, which the Egyptians did not ſee, a prodigy the more capable of convincing the underſtanding, as it is ſubject to no poſſible illuſion, that is, the converſion of the world according to the expreſs prediction of Jeſus Chriſt, and the literal accompliſhment of many other prophecies contained in the New Teſtament, and written at a time when every thing conſpired to extinguiſh Chriſtianity, when the doctrines of Chriſtianity, and Chriſtians themſelves, were in public execration; if then the ſpirit of pride and infidelity, blinds the Deiſt ſo far as to induce him to refuſe his aſſent to truths eſtabliſhed beyond the poſſibility of doubt, by palpable evidence, manifeſt as the Sun at mid-day, why ſhould it appear ſurpriſing, that the ſame ſpirit of infidelity, united to the ſpirit of intereſt, blinded the Egyptians.

To ſuppoſe that natural cauſes, acting according to mechanical laws, could produce the ſtupendous prodigies related in the book of Exodus, and other books of the old law, is ridiculous in the extreme. Moſes lifts up the rod, which he held in his hand and immediately a ſcorching wind blows a whole day and night, and in the morning, the wind collects and brings with it locuſts in ſuch numbers that they covered the ſurface of the ground, deſtroying every thing

thing. Exodus 10. chap. Was the elevation of a rod a ſufficient cauſe to produce ſuch an effect? With the ſame facility, on Pharaoh's promiſe of obedience, a weſterly wind is raiſed, collects all theſe locuſts, and ſweeps them into the Red Sea, not one remaining behind. Are the winds ſubject to man's command? Or how did the wind ſo carefully collect the locuſts that not one was left behind? What natural cauſe can be aſſigned for the death of all the firſt born in Egypt? A peſtilence makes no diſtinction between the firſt and ſecond, or third. What cauſe inferior to omnipotence can be aſſigned for the waters in the Red Sea dividing and forming themſelves like walls on both ſides of the paſſage, through which the Children of Iſrael paſſed? It is well known that water and all other liquids form themſelves to an horizontal level as far as the curvature of the earth permits. The ſimple narration of the ſacred writer confounds all the different opinions which are offered by Deiſtical critics in order to invalidate, or at leaſt to reduce the force of this miracle. The Iſraelites, ſays one, took advantage of an ebb tide, which was greatly increaſed by a ſtrong wind, which continued all night; yes, but the wind did not blow the water out of the paſſage and form it like walls on both ſides, that inſtead of diminiſhing would have increaſed the prodigy. "The Children of Iſrael," ſays the writer, "paſſed through the middle of the dry ſea, and the water was as a wall both to the right hand and the left." Exodus, 14th Chap. 22 v.

They did not paſs through the ſea, ſays another, they only went a certain diſtance and then turned back to the ſame deſert from which they had entered it. Moſes ſays they paſſed through it; David thought ſo too, Pſ. 104 and 113; and *St. Paul* believed it, and the Jews, to whom he addreſſed his epiſtle, did not

doubt it: "by faith they paſſed through the Red Sea as on dry land." Epiſt. to the Heb. Chap. 11. v. 29.

The abſurdity of theſe opinions is ſuch, that it is matter of ſurpriſe that the authors themſelves, however ignorant they may be ſuppoſed, did not remark it; that they did not obſerve in contradicting the ſimple narration of the ſacred writer they contradicted the principles of common ſenſe: for to give the greateſt poſſible weight to their opinions, let us ſuppoſe that the tide was greater than uſual, that the ebb continued twelve or fourteen hours, or more, if they wiſh to have a miracle to ſupport the abſurdity of their reaſoning; that the waters retired not three or four hundred, but twelve or fourteen hundred yards. Did the ebb continue long enough, and was the ſpace ſufficient, to give a paſſage out of the reach of Pharaoh and his army, to a body of ſix hundred and three thouſand five hundred and fifty men, upwards of twenty years old, to all the women, children and old men, to all their flocks and their herds, and their baggage? "We will depart, ſaid Moſes, with our little ones and our old people, with our ſons, and our daughters, with our ſheep, and our herds." Exodus, 10 Chap. 9 v. And Pharaoh ſaid, diſmiſſing them: "take your ſheep, and your herds, as you deſired." 12 Chap. 32 v. Was Pharaoh and his people ſo ignorant as not to know that if the Children of Iſrael followed the tide, they muſt return to the ſame ſhore again? Was it not more ſimple to wait their return than to purſue them? If he had not ſeen an immenſe paſſage open and clear of incumbrances would he have entered it with his chariots? To give ſome colour of probability, or rather of poſſibility, to theſe opinions, let it be ſuppoſed, that the paſſage was effected near the northern extremity of the Red Sea,

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or, as it is now called, the Iſthmus of Suez ; even in that extravagant ſuppoſition, both time and ſpace would have been deficient, and Pharaoh moſt certainly would not have loſt himſelf and his army in the purſuit : he might have paſſed on the Iſthmus, and found them on the other ſide. Every ſuppoſition made in defence of theſe opinions, only ſerves to ſhew their abſurdity, the ignorance and obſtinacy of their authors. To pretend that Moſes was an impoſtor ; that he prevailed on his people to believe that they had paſſed through the Red Sea, though no ſuch thing had happened, is ſuch an extravagant aſſertion that it deſerves contempt, not a ſerious refutation.

It is ſaid that the Children of Iſrael " departing from Phthahiroth, paſſed through the middle of the Sea into the wilderneſs, and, walking three days through the wilderneſs of Etham, they pitched their camp in Mara." Numbers 33 Chap. 8 v. And in the 6th verſe of the ſame Chapter, as alſo Exodus 13 Chap. 20 v, it is ſaid, " that they paſſed from Socoth and pitched their camp in *Etham*, in the extremity of the wilderneſs :" hence it is inferred that they only went a certain diſtance into the Sea and returned to the ſame deſert again. To this the writer replies that *Etham*, where they pitched their camp, ſignifies a particular place in the extremity of the wilderneſs, not the wilderneſs itſelf, if it be not thought that the whole be compriſed within a part, an abſurdity too groſs even for the credulity of a Deiſt. On the oppoſite ſide, the whole of the wilderneſs is called *Etham*, not a particular ſpot of it. Add to this, that Moſes ſays, in that very text, that they paſſed through the middle of the Sea, " *Bethok ha jam ha midbarah*, into the wilderneſs, in the moſt expreſſive manner.

To give ſome colour of truth to this opinion it is ſaid that the dead bodies of the Egyptians, which were

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ſeen by the Children of Iſrael on the ſhore, muſt have been brought back by the flood tide. The appearance of the dead bodies only ſerves to confirm Moſes's relation; for as the Egyptians purſued the Children of Iſrael ſo cloſely that they would have overtaken them, but for the interpoſition of the cloud, which prevented the junction, the van of the Egyptian army muſt have been cloſe to the rear of the Iſraelites, during the whole paſſage, and conſequently near the ſhore, on which they landed at the time of its deſtruction. This accounts for Pharaoh's raſhneſs in the purſuit: the paſſage muſt have been immenſely large and clear, perhaps the waters at ſuch a diſtance, on each ſide, that he did not attend to them in the eagerneſs of the purſuit, or if he did, he muſt have concluded that a junction of the waters muſt involve the Iſraelites with his army in one common ruin: "it ſtood (the cloud) between the camps of the Egyptians and the camps of Iſrael ..... ſo that the whole night they could not approach each other."

If Moſes's deſcription of this event be minutely diſcuſſed, it will appear extremely probable, that Pharaoh and his Egyptians did not know that they had entered on the bed of the ſea: they arrived at Pahiroth which is the point at which the Iſraelites croſſed the ſea, there the cloud reſted between them and the fugitives, the cloud was dark on the Egyptian ſide, whilſt it enlightened the night on the oppoſite ſide, the Egyptians naturally continued the purſuit of an immenſe multitude of people upon dry land without ſuſpecting that they were on the bed of the ſea, the purſuit continued the whole night long, at the morning watch their deſtruction commenced and the junction of the waters compleated it.

However great this prodigy, it was not greater than that which we find in the book of Joſhua, nor more

more violently conteſted by men, who, to free themſelves from the reſtraints of religion, are diſpoſed to ſwallow any abſurdity rather than admit the truth. Joſhua, by God's order, directs the Prieſts, who carried the Ark, to proceed to the brink of the River Jordan, and reſt their feet in the water. Inſtantly the waters above were ſtopped and ſwelled as a mountain, and the waters below deſcended to the ſea of the deſert, or the Dead Sea; and "the people paſſed over againſt Jericho, whilſt the Prieſts, who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord ſtood on dry land in the midſt of Jordan, and the people paſſed on the dry bed of the river," Joſhua Chap. 3, v. 17. Againſt this paſſage over the river Jordan under the conduct of Joſhua no ſuppoſitions are admiſſible. A direct contradiction is full of abſurdity: Joſhua did not, nor could not impoſe on ſuch a numerous body of people; by him the lands were parcelled out amongſt the tribes; forty eight cities ſet apart for the Levites, which diviſion continued to the deſtruction of the Jewiſh nation. The book of Joſhua is the public regiſter of the nation, contains the titles, on which their lands were held, deſcribes their boundaries, never was book more authentic, and in no book of the Scriptures are there more aſtoniſhing prodigies recorded.

The deſtruction of the walls of Jericho by the ſound of a trumpet, Joſ. 6 Chap. 20 v. The ſuſpenſion of the diurnal motion of the Earth and Moon, Joſ. 10 Chap. 13 v. "And the Sun ſtood in the midſt of the Heavens and did not haſten to ſet for the ſpace of one day." 14th. "There was not before nor ſince a day ſo long, God obeying the voice of a man."

This laſt prodigy gave riſe to many ſuppoſitions each inconſiſtent with the other, and all of them inconſiſtent with truth, which is to be found in the

the ſimple narration of the ſacred writer, not elſe-where.

Says one, the Sun and Moon did not ſtop but the ſlaughter was as great as if the day had been length-ened.

God, ſays another, had placed ſome lucid body in the clouds to ſupply the Sun's place, or perhaps had increaſed the light of the Moon.

A Parhelion or Parſelene, in plain Engliſh a mock Sun, or a mock Moon, might produce the effect, if we believe ſome pretenders to optics.

The Sun apparently ſtopped, but in reality continu-ed its courſe, ſays a bold commentator, whoſe autho-rity is of no great weight amongſt Chriſtians, how-ever he offers the reaſons, on which his opinion is founded, becauſe, ſays he, in the principles of Aſtrono-my, it is not the Sun which revolves about the earth but the earth which turns round the Sun, the Sun could not ſtop over the valley of Gabaon, becauſe that city was not under the ecliptic but declining towards the tropic of Cancer ; becauſe it would be more con-venient to poſtpone the victory to the enſuing day ; becauſe the fact is cited from the *Book of the Juſt*, a poetical and conſequently figurative work, and merely ſignifies that by an extraordinary refraction of the Sun's beams the light continued ſomething longer than uſual above the horizon ; becauſe as Joſhua ordered the Moon to ſtand againſt the valley of Ajalon, he muſt have prayed after the Sun was ſet, or whatever lucid body or refraction of light ſupplied its place, finally it would have been extremely inconvenient to the inhabitants of the oppoſite hemiſphere to be de-prived of the light of the Sun ſo long, and it is not probable that ſo many people would have been af-flicted to enable Joſhua to deſtroy his enemies.

The laſt opinion which deſerves any notice, is that

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of ſome well-meaning, but uninformed Chriſtians, who from the truth of this fact, of which they have no doubt, infer that the Earth is fixed and that the Sun revolves about it.

The firſt opinion is a direct contradiction to the text; it would be more convenient to reject the authority of the Book at once.

The ſecond ſubſtitutes an imaginary miracle to a real prodigy, it deſerves no anſwer. If there be a miracle at all admitted, why reject that, which is recorded to ſubſtitute one that is only ſuppoſed? If it be thought that God of his free will eſtabliſhed the mechanical laws, to which the material world is ſubject, he might at the ſame inſtant have ordered a temporary ſuſpenſion of any one of them with equal facility; and to pretend that mechanical laws are not ſubject to his controul is to make him dependent on his creatures, not his creatures on him. This ſurpaſſes abſurdity.

The third only argues the ignorance of its author. A parhelion or parſelene is but a certain portion of that luminous circle, which ſometimes ſurrounds, or rather appears to ſurround, the Sun or Moon, from which ſome refracted rays repreſent the Sun or Moon in that point from which they come direct to the eye, a parhelion therefore or parſelene could not remain over the horizon when the Sun and Moon was far under it without ſubſtituting one prodigy to another.

The fourth alſo gives an imaginary miracle to exclude a real one: for an appearance of the Sun above the horizon for many hours after Sun ſet is evidently miraculous: and all the reaſons, which he offers in ſupport of his opinion, prove nothing: whether the Sun revolves round the Earth or the Earth turns round the Sun, is uſeleſs to enquire, a man muſt always ſpeak the language which is underſtood: Aſtronomers

now

now a days believe that the Earth deſcribes its orbit round the Sun as the centre of its motion, and they believe it on ſufficient grounds; they alſo know that the Earth, in its diurnal motion, turns round its own axis, expoſing an entire hemiſphere to that blaze of light, which the Sun emits continually, enjoys all the bleſſings of light on that hemiſphere, whilſt the oppoſite is involved in darkneſs; they know that the Sun neither ſets nor riſes, but is ſaid to riſe when any point on the ſurface of the Earth comes to the light, and is ſaid to ſet, when that point deſcribes a ſemi-circle and is again immerſed in darkneſs, yet all Aſtronomers ſay that the Sun riſes and ſets, that its daily motion is from the eaſt to the weſt. Thus in fact is its apparent motion, being in an oppoſite ſenſe to the real motion of the earth, which is from the weſt to the eaſt. But this is the language which mankind underſtands, and if a man were to ſpeak a different language he would not be underſtood.

The ſecond reaſon given is frivolous. Though the Sun was not vertical to the Valley of Gabaon, it might have been in, or near, the circle, which was verticle to it, and that authoriſed Joſhua to ſay it was over it, over and under are relative terms. The next reaſon is paſſed unnoticed, the author ſeems diſpoſed to give advice to his Creator. As to the enſuing reaſon, it is true, the ſacred writer ſays the prodigy is written in the *Book of the Juſt*, but he does not refer us to that book for the truth of his aſſertion. Whether that book was poetical or not, which is mere matter of ſurmiſe, there is no figurative expreſſion in the book of Joſhua, where this fact is recorded. That Joſhua did not pray until after Sun Set becauſe he ordered the Moon to ſtand over the Valley of Ajalon is a ſtrange aſſertion. What has the author never ſeen the Sun and Moon above the horizon

zon at the ſame time? If Joſhua had ordered the Moon to ſtand over the Valley of Gabaon with the Sun the obſervation would have been judicious, but that the Sun ſhould be in the verticle over or near the Valley of Gabaon, and the Moon near the verticle of Ajalon is matter of ſurpriſe but to a man, who is unacquainted with their motions.

In his laſt obſervation he introduces a new ſort of evidence, that is, the probability of inconvenience to one nation is ſufficient to prove that a fact, which is publicly known, and authentically recorded by another nation has not happened. As to the inconvenience, to which the inhabitants of the other hemiſphere were expoſed, it was poſſible there might be ſome, but it was not injurious: if a man be deprived of that to which he has a ſtrict right, the inconvenience he ſuffers is injurious and unjuſt; but if a man be deprived of that, which he holds from the mere bounty of another, however great the inconvenience, there is no injury, no injuſtice. The inconvenience complained of was not great, nor was there any derangement in the order of the Heavenly Bodies: a ſuſpenſion of the diurnal motion of the Earth, whilſt the annual motion continued the ſame, was all that was neceſſary to effect that ſtupendous prodigy. The motion of rotation about the axis of the Earth, which produces day and night, is unconnected with its influence on the other celeſtial bodies: it can at leaſt neither increaſe nor diminiſh it.

From theſe words of Joſhua, and ſimilar expreſſions, in other parts of the Scripture, to infer that the Earth is immoveable, and that the Sun effects a revolution round it in twenty-four hours, is injudicious. Theſe expreſſions ſignify no more than the apparent motion of the Sun, and the apparent immobility of the Earth, it is the language of ſcience and of ignorance,

it is the language of all mankind, the ſacred penmen muſt have ſpoken it, if they wiſhed to be underſtood. We ſay now, as Solomon did, that the Sun riſes and ſets, that it comes to the meridian, &c. Eccl. 1ſt Chap. 5 v. In the preceding verſe it is ſaid, that the Earth ſtands for ever. This has no reference to the immobility of the Earth: it ſimply ſignifies that the Earth continues to exiſt, or ſubſiſts. *Hamadeth.* Though generations ſucceed each other.

The Pentateuch of all works the moſt ſimple, the moſt ſublime, the moſt ſatisfactory, is by our modern Philoſophers ſet in competition with the romantic tales of Sanchoniaton, a Phenician author, who lived, if at all, about two thouſand years before the Chriſtian æra, of which ſome fragments remain, thought to be ſuppoſed by Dodwell and Dupin, with the rhapſody of Zoroaſter, a Perſian tale writer, whom Iluet demonſtrates to have been a fabulous perſonage; with an Indian work called *Hanſcrit* or *Sanſcrit*, of which they pretend to underſtand a few words; they might have added *Ovid's Metamorphoſes*, if the work were not in the hands of children, and they are deſirous of paſſing for men of profound learning; of ſome of theſe pretended works they give what, they call verſions, the ravings of their own fancy, and cite manuſcripts which do not exiſt but in their own imagination. From all this they conclude the immenſe antiquity given to the world by Egyptian and Chineſe tales, to be well authenticated, and thence infer that Moſes's account of the Creation is fabulous. A man of real ſcience, would draw a contradictory inference, for having as we have already ſeen, the moſt inconteſtible evidence of the authenticity of the Pentateuch, he would conclude, without heſitation, that all accounts inconſiſtent with it were fabulous. Our modern critics are extraordinary men; in the moſt abſurd

ſurd fables they ſee nothing but truth, and in ſimple truth they diſcover impoſſibilities; the vanity of the men is a glaſs, which diſtorts every object.

In the Book of Geneſis, ſay they, there are many things which appear fabulous, the creation of the world in ſix days, which might have been done in an inſtant, the ſeduction of Eve by a ſerpent ſpeaking her language, the folly of Adam, the founder of the world, to think that by eating a fruit he ſhould become equal to God.

A man of ſenſe judges of facts by the authenticity of the book which relates them, he does not judge of the authenticity of the book, by the facts which it records; if we were to reject all the facts, of which we do not clearly conceive the reaſons, nine tenths of all hiſtories ſhould be at once ſuppreſſed.

Nothing obliged the Almighty God to create all the Beings which compoſe the Univerſe at the ſame inſtant; he yet continues to create, and will continue until the end of time, he thereby ſhews his independence on his creatures, and their total dependence on him. To enquire why he gives exiſtence to ſuch a man, at ſuch a point of time preciſely, and not either before, or after, is impertinent: he is not obliged to give the man an exiſtence at any time: it is a matter of grace, not of right, when granted; this reaſoning is applicable to every Being, which contributes to compoſe the Univerſe.

That a woman's vanity may expoſe her to temptation is not matter of ſurpriſe; and that the organs of the ſerpent ſet in motion by ſo powerful an agent as the Demon, ſhould form articulate ſounds is not difficult to conceive. Adam did not think that eating the fruit would make him equal to God, he well knew the contrary. "Adam was not ſeduced." Epiſt. to Titus, 2. Chap. Nor did Eve expect an

equality

equality but a similarity of knowledge: she was miserably deceived, as are her children, our modern Deists, whose vanity and curiosity resembles that of their mother.

Why did not Moses begin his recital with the ruin of the Angels? He did not write their history. The Jews in his time knew it; it was not necessary to inform them, he expressly forbid them to consult Evil Spirits, Deut. 18 Chap. 11 v. "There will not be amongst you a man to consult *Ob*," that is a Spirit speaking as through the navel, a Ventriloque.

The existence of these Evil Spirits was known to the Heathen world as to the Christian; the nature of the crime inductive of their perdition is known but by mere conjecture, the text of Isaias, which is applied by some to the chief of these rebel spirits, literally regards the King of Tyr. The whole text is strongly metaphorical. "I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the highest stars, I will sit in the mountain of the testament, in the sides of the north." Isaias, 14th Chap. 13 v. If this Evil Spirit, proud of his own excellence, pretended a sort of equality with, or rather independence on, his God, it is not more surprising than to hear the Atheist dispute even the existence of his God. It is for this reason that Job calls him "King over all the sons of pride." Job, 41 Chap. 25 v.

The pretended antiquity of the Chinese monarchy is offered by our modern Deists as totally subversive of Moses's account of the Creation, they may add the Babylonian annals, which give four hundred thousand years to their empire, and the Egyptian, which equal them in absurdity. The account given by Moses has every possible mark of authenticity, the Chinese, Babylonian and Egyptian annals are puerile fables. Mr. Goguet says, in his origin of laws, "that the astro-

nomical

nomical obſervations, with which ſome have endeavoured to ſupport the pretended antiquity of the Chineſe are manifeſtly ſuppoſed, that ſome of their literati, though the Chineſe in general have no idea of criticiſm, remarked it; that it may be ſaid with confidence that there is no credit whatſoever to be given to their hiſtory, previous to the year 206, before the Chriſtian æra; that until that time it is a tiſſue of fables and contradictions, a monſtrous chaos, out of which nothing, that is reaſonable, or connected can be extracted." Such is the work, which in the idea of the Deiſt is ſufficient to condemn the plain ſimple narrative of Moſes.

"The Chineſe hiſtorians," ſay the authors of the Univerſal Hiſtory, "have applied in a ridiculous manner to the ancient ſtate of their monarchy the confuſed notions tranſmitted to them by vague tradition concerning the creation of the world, the formation of man, the deluge, the inſtitutions of arts, of all this they compoſed a monſtrous ſyſtem of hiſtory."

The reader may reſt ſatisfied with the following ſpecimen of the boaſted hiſtory of the Chineſe:

Toby was conceived by his mother in contact with a rainbow, his body was partly that of a ſerpent, and Chin-nung had the head of an ox. If the reader deſires to know more of this remarkable hiſtory he muſt conſult ſome modern Scioliſt who is accuſtomed to ſwallow monſtrous abſurdities, the writer is not diſpoſed to laviſh time on nonſenſe.

The Chineſe calculation of eclipſes during the ſpace of four thouſand years is merely imaginary; about a century and a half ago they were obliged to have recourſe to the Mahometans for the calculation of their almanacks; and in 1772, they were forced to call for ſome Jeſuits to fill the tribunal of mathematics,

tics, which by the death of Father Hallerſtein could no longer continue its calculations. Mathematical calculation is too abſtruſe for a Chineſe; before the introduction of Europeans their knowledge of that ſcience was low indeed, nor is it yet much increaſed. Father Martin read, in one of their moſt authentic books, that in the reign of Yahoe or Yao the Sun enlightened China during the ſpace of ten days and ten nights. The calculation of the eclipſes reported in their annals is ſo incorrect, that Caſſini by correcting their errors retrenched ſix hundred years from their chronology. After all from the calculation of eclipſes no inference can be drawn in favour of the antiquity of any country: ſuch calculations may extend as far as man's imagination can reach, either backward or forward. Mr. Touquet, the titular biſhop of Eleuthropolis, publiſhed in 1729, a chronological table, which a Tartarian nobleman had extracted from the changcun, or great annals of the empire. In this table the commencement of true chronology amongſt the Chineſe, is fixed in the reign of Lye-vang, three hundred and forty-four years before the Chriſtian Æra: more acute chronologiſts fix it at a much later period. It is needleſs to obſerve that Xi-hvam-tu, a ſanguinary and vigilant tyrant, deſtroyed all the annals of China in his reign, which continued thirty ſeven years. So attentive was he on the deſtruction of theſe annals, that he burned four hundred and ſixty of their literati, together with the annals which they had concealed, he thus ſuppreſſed a work filled with ridiculous fables, and on uncertain confuſed tradition a ſort of rhapſody was ſubſtituted equally if not more fabulous than the former.

The Chineſe Emperors exerciſe their dominion over time as well as place: they grant letters of nobility,

lity, which have a retro-active force, enobling the grantee's anceſtors for two, for four, or perhaps ten thouſand years before. The antiquity of ſuch an empire muſt be great in their imagination, to contradict their pretended antiquity is a capital offence. Du Halde's deſcription of China, T. 1. Hence the Miſſionaries dare not ſay what they think, and to give their opinions in writing would be highly indiſcreet.

Diodorus, of Sicily, in the firſt book of his Bibliotheca, ſect. 2, ſays: "Gods, as ſome of the Egyptian writers relate, reigned firſt in Egypt, then Heroes (that is Demi-Gods) about eighteen thouſand years, the laſt of theſe was Hirus the ſon of Iſis, the kingdom was governed by men about fifteen thouſand years. This requires no comment, theſe Gods and Heroes are imaginary Beings."

The Babylonian and Egyptian tales, are paſſed unnoticed, they reſemble the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.

The writer comes now to diſcuſs another difficulty ſtated againſt Moſes's account of the Creation. Strong marks, indications of the moſt remote antiquity, are to be found in the phyſical world, which are manifeſtly inconſiſtent with the antiquity aſcribed by Moſes to the Creation: A famous naturaliſt gravely tells us, that the Sea has ſucceſſively covered all the different parts of this globe, that the higheſt mountains were for many ages under the Sea. The latter part of this aſſertion contradicts the former, the ſpirit of infidelity ſo blinds men, even of ſome ſcience, that they dont remark the glaring inconſiſtencies, which they frequently advance in a few words. Since, according to the known laws of hydroſtatics, water, and all other liquids, compoſe themſelves to a level ſo that every point of the ſurface is equi-diſtant from the attracting centre, if the higheſt mountains on earth were

were covered with water, the whole earth was covered not ſucceſſively but at the ſame time, and the waters were raiſed above the preſent ſurface of the Sea to the height of the higheſt mountains, the naturaliſt forgot to tell us how this immenſe quantity of water was diſpoſed of, nor has he deigned to inform us how the human ſpecies, or land animals, which are not accuſtomed, at leaſt in our times, to live in water, managed to ſubſiſt during them ages. It is true one of his admirers tells us that men were at that time fiſh, and that when the waters retiring they were left on dry land, their tails opened and became legs: we muſt thank this gentleman for the information he gives, whether we acknowledge a fiſh or a monkey for an anceſtor is of little conſequence. Theſe are the teachers of the world! Theſe are the men, whom nature has been endeavouring to form for millions of years, they now come at length to undeceive the world!

The Naturaliſt adds an obſervation, by way of proof, that the re-entering angles on one ſide of the mountains, are oppoſite to the ſaliant angles on the other. This like the former is an effect of his imagination: in ſome places they are, in others they are not. There are many mountains inſulated immenſely diſtant from any other. Mountains and valleys formed as they are argue the wiſdom and bounty of the Creator: mountains break the current of air—make the winds variable, which would without them, blow always in the ſame direction. In them are placed receptacles for waters, which the clouds convey to their ſummit, and when condenſed, ſo that they become ſpecifically heavier than air, fall in drops of rain, this rain collected into theſe receptacles, iſſue from the ſides of the mountains through ſprings, which uniting in the valleys form rivulets, and there uniting form rivers, as the valleys are intended for conveying the

the waters, their ſinuoſities are neceſſary to prevent the too great rapidity of the waters, which deſcending from the mountains with an accelerated velocity, if not broken in their courſe would ravage the country. Mountains were previous to the Deluge, they were then neceſſary as they are now. Perhaps the Flood may have formed ſome, or broken others, but in general from their neceſſity they muſt have entered into the plan of the Creation.

The Naturaliſt pretends that the ſea has formed the mountains, though the Flood in his opinion could not, the Flood if we believe him had made no change in the ſurface of the earth. The aſſertion is rather bold: what, the ſea riſing fifteen cubits above the higheſt mountains, in the greateſt poſſible agitation, made no change! St. Peter thought there was a total change. "The then World flooded with water periſhed the Heavens and Earth which now are." .... Epiſt. 2, Chap. 3, v. 6 and 7.

If, ſays the Naturaliſt, the ſurface of the earth had been diſſolved by the Flood, the different ſubſtances, which compoſe it, ought to have been depoſed by the waters when ſettled, deſcending according to their ſpecific gravity, yet we ſee rocks of granite placed over ſand and mud, and light ſubſtances deep in the earth, whilſt the moſt weighty are found on the very ſurface. If this had been univerſally the caſe this difficulty would appear ſerious, but the contrary is true in general, the more heavy ſubſtances are found at the greateſt depth. In ſo great a commotion a mathematical exactneſs was not obſerved, moreover theſe rocks, which are now found at the ſurface of the earth, immediately over lighter ſubſtances, were they rocks at that time? An immenſe rock never did ſwim in water. If theſe have been depoſed they muſt have been then of a lighter nature, ſand or ſlime,

which in the courſe of time has been coagulated by the intervention of ſome fluid, or ſome other natural agent. Petrifactions are not uncommon.

Banks of ſhells, which are frequently found far diſtant from the ſea, evince the truth of the Flood; theſe ſhells are formed of a certain ſubſtance, which is not ſubject to decay, from the immenſe quantities found in ſome places the Naturaliſt infers that the ſea muſt have reſted longer than is conſiſtent with Moſes's account of the Flood. Here he offers mere conjecture as evidence againſt a well-known fact. Is it not poſſible that the waters of the Deluge might have been reſtrained in theſe valleys by ſome obſtacle which time had removed? Incalculable quantities of ſhells are collected in a ſhort time, and, what concludes evidently againſt the Naturaliſt, bones of animals have been found in countries where they do not breed, where they cannot live, the bones of elephants in Siberia, and in 1772 the bones of a rhinoceros were found there. It is well known that the elephant and rhinoceros are inhabitants of hot countries, that their bones muſt have been tranſported to Siberia by ſome ſuch inundation as the flood; the waters which depoſed their bones in Siberia muſt have taken them up in Africa or Aſia, far ſouth of Siberia. Theſe animals are not inhabitants of the ſea as the ſhell-fiſh of Touraine.

An Engliſh traveller, intending to extend the ſphere of human knowledge, by his own experiments, found by examining the different layers emitted in the eruptions of Mount Ætna, that the world is at leaſt fourteen thouſand years old. There are, he ſays, to be ſeen in ſome places ſeven layers, or beds, one over the other, each covered with an excellent bed of ſoil, two thouſand years are not more than ſufficient to convert one of theſe layers into a good mould. Hence this

this mathematician infers there muſt have paſſed fourteen thouſand years to convert theſe ſeven layers into earth. But if theſe layers are converted into mould, how did he find the ſeven yet entire, and a bed of earth between each layer and the next to it? It ſeems fourteen thouſand years have not yet converted the firſt of the ſeven into mould, as this wonderful calculator found it entire, thus, inſtead of enlarging the ſcience of mankind, he adds his mite to that immenſe ſtock of ignorance, and vanity, which we find in the writings of our modern travellers. Let us, however, ſuppoſe that this our traveller intended to ſay, that each bed of volcanic matter required two thouſand years to cover it with vegetative earth, his obſervation would then coincide with the conjectures made by more intelligent men on the eruptions of Mount Veſuvius, the layers of volcanic matter ſay they, are found in ſome places to the number of ſix, with a bed of vegetative earth between the layers of volcanic matter, hence they infer that ages without number muſt have elapſed before this accumulation could have been formed. One of theſe travellers however relates a fact which totally deſtroys theſe conjectures. The city of Herculaneum, buried by an earthquake, is in ſome parts ſeventy feet, in others one hundred and twelve feet under the preſent ſurface of the earth. Between the ſurface of the earth and the city, or rather the ruins of this city, are ſeveral layers of volcanic matter, and between theſe layers are beds of vegatative earth. Our Engliſh traveller would have found many thouſands of years in this phœnomenon, yet we know that eighteen hundred years have not yet paſſed ſince Herculaneum was a flouriſhing city.

The vegetative earth is placed in a ſhort time over the volcanic matter by many uniting cauſes: aſhes, earth,

earth, duſt and other ſubſtances, are emitted by the volcano, the rains waſh down earth from the ſides of the mountains, men and animals bring ſubſtances which are ſoon converted into earth, the induſtrious huſbandman covers the moſt barren rock with vegetative mould. Thus ſimple facts confound the wild conjectures of wondering, and wonder-telling travellers.

But there are many extinguiſhed volcanos found of which no writer ſpeaks, theſe at leaſt ſpeak the remote antiquity of the world.

True, there are many found, and many more may be found if ſought for in the wilds of America, of Africa and Aſia, where no writer is to be found; phœnomenons ſometimes paſs unnoticed even by good writers, and of the writings of many, who might have noticed them, ſome have fallen victims to the ravages of time.

There is no ancient fact more authentic than the Deluge: Moſes deſcribes it 856 years after it happened when the fact was freſh in the memory of man; when it was impoſſible for him to impoſe on the world; the Son of Sirach ſpeaks of it as an undoubted fact, Eccl. 44th Chap. 18th and 19th v. St. Paul, in his Epiſtle to the Hebrews, Chap. 11. v. 7, aſcribes Noah's preſervation to his faith. The Saviour himſelf, Matthew 24 Chap. 38 and 39 v. compares his laſt coming to the time of Noah, when the flood deſtroyed mankind. The ſame is repeated in St. Luke, 17 Chap. 26 v. St. Peter, in his 1ſt Epiſt. 3 Chap. 20th v, ſays there were but eight ſouls ſaved in the Ark; and in his ſecond Epiſt. Chap. 2, v. 5, he ſays that God did not ſpare the primitive world, that he ſaved Noah, eighth, the preacher of juſtice, and brought the Flood on the impious.

On this ſubject the Heathen writers agree with the ſacred penmen: Beroſus the Chaldean tells us that the

the Ark, near the end of the Deluge, ſtopped on a mountain of Armenia; this teſtimony is not offered as authentic, though cited by ſome writers. Beroſus was cotemporary with Alexander the Great, Prieſt of the Temple of Belas, in Chaldea. Some fragments of his hiſtory remain in Joſephus, the work itſelf is loſt, and no loſs to the world. The romance publiſhed in his name under the title of Antiquities, is a ſuppoſed piece. See Hiſt. des G. Hom. Nicolas, of Damaſcus, in the 96th book of his hiſtory, ſays that one man eſcaped in a veſſel from the univerſal flood, and that the remains of the veſſel were preſerved a long time on a high mountain in Armenia; Abydenus, in his hiſtory of the ancient Medes and Aſſyrians, deſcribes the Flood nearly as Moſes did; Ovid, in his Metamorphoſes, attempts a deſcription of the Flood, which he intermixes with ridiculous fables, as he did every other event, which he deſcribes, and Varro ſpeaks of the time which elapſed from Adam's creation to the Flood, "from the commencement of mankind to the Flood; finally the Chineſe ſay that a man whom they call Puencuus eſcaped with his family from the univerſal deluge. This agreement of ſacred and profane writers, atteſting the tradition of the world, is ſurely more than ſufficient to authenticate a fact, in which the whole world was intereſted. It is not wild ſuppoſitions, and impertinent queſtions which invalidate public facts.

From the dimenſions of the Ark, as deſcribed by Moſes, it is not difficult to demonſtrate that there was in it a ſufficient ſpace to contain the animals preſerved from the Flood, together with the neceſſary proviſions for the time they were encloſed.

It is alſo certain that there is a ſufficient quantity of water to cover the higheſt mountains on the earth without any increaſe, which if neceſſary was eaſy to omnipotence.

omnipotence. It is well known to the judicious philoſopher that there is an incalculable quantity of water ſuſpended in the atmoſphere, we ſee with what rapidity a high wind dries up ſmall pools of water, becauſe every layer of air, which comes in contact with the water, inſtantly abſorbs a quantity of water, neceſſary to ſaturate that layer, and theſe layers ſucceed each other in proportion to the velocity of the wind: a quantity therefore neceſſary to ſaturate the whole atmoſphere may remain ſuſpended, if an extra quantity be raiſed it muſt again deſcend in rain, or, if condenſed by cold, in ſnow or hail. Diſſertations have been written by other men on this ſubject, and the moſt ſatisfactory ſolutions given to all the difficulties, which wild ſpeculatiſts propoſe.

As to the exiſtence of whole nations of giants and pygmies, they exiſt in the imagination of Atheiſts: ſome have been, and ſome few are, of an extraordinary ſize, and ſome others extremely little; but theſe do not form nations, nor are they of a different ſpecies, their anceſtors are known. The term Gibor which has been tranſlated by that of Giant ſignifies a powerful and violent man. They are numerous now as they were before the Flood; and now as then we call virtuous, pious men, the ſons of light, the children of God; and vain, capricious, diſſolute girls may well be called the daughters of men, marriage contracts between ſuch characters, were cenſured by Moſes, and the conſequences marked in the ſimilarity of manners between the children and their mothers. This we ſee every day. The children of God marrying the daughters of men gave riſe to many ridiculous tales and wild conjectures. Ignorance finds myſteries where common ſenſe can diſcern none.

Difficulties are ſtated by ſome pretenders to ſcience againſt

againſt Moſes's account from the different colours of the human ſpecies in different countries. Theſe are as frivolous as the former. Difference in colour as in height, in ſtrength, in activity, in underſtanding, is merely accidental, the human ſpecies, is, in all individuals eſſentially the ſame. The black man in Ethiopia, the copper-coloured ſavage in Canada, the white man in Europe, is the ſame man, tinged with the colour of the climate, in which he lives, his food and manner of living contribute to increaſe or diminiſh the effect of the climate. Some anatomiſts imagine that the pores in the ſcarf ſkin of the black, dilated by the burning heat of a vertical ſun, abſorb a greater quantity of light; others think that the effect is produced by the great poroſity of the inner ſkin; and ſome think that there is a liquid ſubſtance between the ſcarf ſkin and the inner ſkin, which abſorbs the light. It is manifeſt, without conſulting optics, that any body which abſorbs the light muſt appear black. A diſſertation on this ſubject may be curious, but is totally uſeleſs: reaſon ſays that a black man and a white man, a big man and a little man, a lame man and a blind man, a fool and a knave, are men, individuals of the ſame ſpecies, differenced individually not ſpecifically. A man and a horſe are individuals of different ſpecies, differenced ſpecifically, not individually. This may ſerve as a general anſwer to all the difficulties, which are founded on the difference of ſize, of colour, of wit, of ſtrength, &c. of men in the ſame or in different climates.

We have now examined the moſt material difficulties ſtated by Atheiſts and Deiſts againſt Moſes's account of the Creation, and ſhewn them to be frivolous in the extreme. That remote antiquity which they aſcribe to the world, and all the marks of this antiquity are merely imaginary, the offſpring of ignorance

ignorance and vanity: the diſcerning philoſopher diſcovers the moſt ſenſible indications of the contrary: the late invention of many arts and ſciences, the increaſing population, yet leaving one half the world a wild and uncultivated deſert, are ſtubborn truths which forced that infamouſly famous Atheiſt *Lucretius*, to acknowledge that the preſent world was not of remote antiquity. He thought that other Poets would have ſung wars previous to that of Thebes or Troy, at leaſt that ſome monuments of that remote antiquity would be found. It has alſo been ſhewn that Moſes did atteſt his legation by miraculous powers; that the prodigies recorded in his Books could not be ſuppoſed; that the great number of authentic copies given by his order to all Elders and Levites, who were the miniſters of the eſtabliſhed worſhip, with expreſs directions to have them read before all the people, at the great feſtival of the Tabernacles, precluded even a poſſibility of interpolation. It is therefore certain that the truths contained in theſe books are divinely revealed, or elſe that God by an act of his almighty power has atteſted a falſehood, a blaſphemy ſo impious, ſo daring, that even the Deiſt, impious as he is, dare not aſſert it.

We ſhall now proceed to ſtate a ſecond proof, as yet more forcible, of the authenticity of the Scriptures, that is, the prophecies contained in them, which were neither ſuppoſed nor inſerted after the accompliſhment, and of the accompliſhment of which there is the moſt incontrovertible evidence.

We have already remarked that contingent events depending on the concurrence of innumerable cauſes poſſeſſing a power of ſelf-determination, are not within the reach of limited intelligence; to foreſee and foretell ſuch events with the utmoſt certainty is the excluſive prerogative of the Divinity. Conjectural powers

powers increaſe in proportion to the ſagacity of the intelligence; but all conjectures in reſpect to contingent events are uncertain. There is but God only, whoſe ſagacity is infinite, and who of courſe pronounces with unerring certainty. That there are many ſuch events foreſeen, and foretold, and of the accomplishment of which there can be no doubt, is manifeſt to every man, who reads the Scriptures.

Thus that Noah foreſaw the Deluge is evident from his building the Ark and preparing for it; that the patriarch Jacob foreſaw that Ephraim the younger ſon of Joſeph would give his name to one of the Tribes, and to a more numerous Tribe than his elder brother Manaſſes, is equally certain from his announcing it when they were children, of this event the whole Jewiſh nation are witneſſes; that Joſeph foreſaw that ſeven years of famine would ſucceed ſeven years of abundance is incontrovertible, from his being taken out of a priſon in a ſtrange country—placed at the head of the State, and preparing for the famine in the abundant years, of this the Egyptians had, to the deſtruction of their empire, the moſt unequivocal proof, that is, a tax of one fifth of the produce impoſed on all the lands, excluding all the lands appropriated to their Prieſts, who were fed from the King's granaries during the famine, and did not ſell their lands to the Crown, as the other landholders did; he alſo foreſaw that God would withdraw the deſcendants of his father from Egypt, and conduct them into the land which he had promiſed to their anceſtors, or he would not have adjured them to take his bones with them.

Moſes foreſaw and foretold the many calamities of Egypt; the deſtruction of Pharaoh and his army: theſe were facts of the moſt public nature, to which both nations were witneſſes; he foretold, Deut.

17th, that the Children of Iſrael would get poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan, and in the courſe of time elect a King. Of this event there is no doubt; he foretold that they and their King would be carried into captivity, in conſequence of their diſobedience to the laws which he eſtabliſhed. This alſo happened.

Joſhua foretold that, the man, who would re-build Jericho, would be accurſed, that he would loſe his firſt born in laying the foundation and his youngeſt ſon in erecting the gates. Jos. 4th Chap. This event took place many ages after, when Hielo of Bethel re-built that city he loſt Abiram his firſt born in laying the foundation, and Segub his youngeſt in placing the gates, "according to the word of God, by his ſervant Joſhua," ſaid the writer 3d Book of Kings, 16th Chap.

The writer paſſes unnoticed many other events which were foretold, and cites no fact but ſuch as were of ſuch public notoriety that not even the ſhadow of a doubt can fall on them, nor any thing, which has the appearance of a difficulty, be ſtated againſt them. In like manner in the Books of the Prophets are events foretold, againſt the accompliſhment of which no objection can lie: Iſaias, Chap. 5th, foretells the deſtruction of the Jews, and enumerates the crimes, which cauſed the calamity; Chap. 7th he foretold that the Kings of Syria and Iſrael would not take Jeruſalem, and added that in ſixty five years Ephraim would ceaſe to be a people, which prophecy was fulfilled by Sennacherib ſending a new colony to Samaria, 4th B. of Kings, 17th Chap. 24th v.

The deſtruction of Babylon by the Medes he foretold, and its devaſtation for ever, Chap. 13th, the ruin of Moab, Chap. 15th, the devaſtation of Tyre during the ſpace of ſeventy years and its re-eſtabliſhment after, Chap. 22d.

He

He told the King of Juda, Ezechias, that God had added fifteen years to his life, Chap. 38th, and he added, Chap. 39th, that all the treaſures which he had ſhewn through vanity to the Babylonian ambaſſadors, would be carried into Babylon, and that ſome of his children would be eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon, though at that time Ezechias had no child, this was not the language of a flattering courtier. He foretold the ſucceſs of Cyrus in his wars two hundred years before his birth, and named him, he alſo added that Cyrus would re-build the city and the temple, which were then in a flouriſhing ſtate, Chap. 44th and 45th. The writer paſſes in ſilence all theſe prophecies againſt which the imagination of the Deiſt may offer the ſhadow of an argument and ſimply adduces theſe, of the event of which there can be no poſſible doubt.

Jeremias foretold many calamities which happened according to his word, and for which he ſuffered ſeverely. The writer gives an inſtance, but one the moſt remarkable, Chap. 25th. He foretold that the inhabitants of Juda would be tranſported into Babylon, and ſerve the Babylonians during the ſpace of ſeventy years, that at the expiration of theſe ſeventy years God would judge Babylon and that it would be deſtroyed for ever. "Behold (ſaith the Lord) I will ſend and aſſume the kindred of the north and Nebuchodonoſor my ſervant on this land and on its inhabitants, ... and theſe nations ſhall ſerve the King of Babylon ſeventy years, and when theſe ſeventy years are expired I will viſit on the King of Babylon, and on that nation, their iniquity, and on the land of the Chaldeans, and I will make them an everlaſting ſolitude." Of the accompliſhment of this prophecy there can be no doubt, the writer of the 4th Book of Kings gives a particular deſcription of the

event

event, 25th Chap. and the author of Chronicles concludes thus, v. 17th, " he brought on them the King of the Chaldeans . . . . . and he transferred the treasures of the temple, of the King, and of the Princes, into Babylon, the enemy burned the Houſe of God and deſtroyed the wall of Jeruſalem . . . . . if any man eſcaped the ſword, he was carried into Babylon, and ſerved the King and his ſons until the King of Perſia reigned . . . . . until the ſeventy years were fulfilled in the firſt year of Cyrus, King of Perſia . . . . he ordered to be proclaimed in his whole kingdom, even by writing, thus ſaith Cyrus, King of the Perſians : the Lord God of Heaven gave me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he commanded me to build him a houſe in Jeruſalem." . . . . . fulfilling at the ſame time the prophecies of Iſaias and Jeremias.

What ſhadow of objection can imagination ſuggeſt againſt the prophecies of Daniel ? The events, which he foretold were of the utmoſt importance to the whole civilized world. Chap. 2. he tells Nebuchodonoſor the viſion which he had forgotten, and all the events which were ſignified in it. Chap. 4th, he told the King the ſevere ſentence which was paſſed againſt him, and the execution of which ſhortly after followed. Chap. 5th, he explained to Baltaſſar a more dreadful ſentence, which was written in myſterious characters on the wall, announcing the death of that unfortunate prince, and the deſtruction of his empire the ſame night. Zenophon's account of that event agrees perfectly with the Prophet's. " Baltaſſar," ſays the Prophet made a great feaſt for his nobles, a thouſand, and they drank each man according to his age . . . . . they drank wine and praiſed their gods ; gold and ſilver, braſs and iron, wood and ſtone, ... " when," ſaid the hiſtorian, " Cyrus heard that there was a great feſtival in Babylon, and that all the Babylonians

lonians drank and eat the whole night long, as ſoon as it was dark he opened the channels which were previouſly cut near to the river, and turned the water into the marſh Nictiris. Thus Babylon fell in a drunken fit. The accounts of both writers coincide, Chap. 8th, he relates a viſion and explains it: "The ram . . . . . is the King of the Medes and Perſians, and the goat the King of the Greeks, the great horn between its eyes the firſt King (Alexander) and the four horns which roſe when the firſt was broken four Kings of the ſame nation but not in his ſtrength." Joſephus the hiſtorian ſays that when Alexander ſaw this prophecy in which he himſelf was ſo clearly foretold, and his conqueſt of the Medes and Perſians under the figure of the goat breaking the ram's two horns, and trampling on the body, he ſpared the city of Jeruſalem, which he intended to have deſtroyed. And Chap. 11th, Daniel ſeems to write a hiſtory of ſucceeding Princes, and their wars, which the events have literally verified, his account is ſo minute, and correct, that ſome Heathen Philoſophers preſſed by the primitive Chriſtians on the ſubject, finding it impoſſible to decline the force of Daniel's authority, pretended that the hiſtory had been ſuppoſed by the Chriſtians, and written after the events had happened. However the Jews, who are preſſed by Daniel's authority more forcibly than the Heathens, never accuſed the Chriſtians of any ſuppoſition or interpolation.

The Prophet Ezekiel not only foretold events in the moſt ſimple manner, but his very actions were expreſſive of the events. Chap. 12th, v. 7, "I done," ſays the Prophet, "as God commanded me; I produced my veſſels as a man going into captivity by day, and in the evening, I made an opening in the wall with my hand, and I went forth in the dark,

and

and was carried on men's ſhoulders in their ſight." ..... 10th v, "ſay to them, thus ſaith the Lord God of Iſrael, this burden is on the Prince, who is in Jeruſalem, and on the whole Houſe of Iſrael, who is in the midſt of them ..... as I have done, ſo will be done to them; they will remove from their dwellings and go into captivity, and the Prince, who is in the midſt of them, ſhall be carried on ſhoulders, he ſhall go forth in the dark, they ſhall dig through the wall to bring him out, his face ſhall be covered that he may not ſee the ground with his eyes, and I will ſpread my net over him and he ſhall be taken in my net, and I will bring him to Babylon into the land of the Chaldeans, and he ſhall not ſee it, and there he ſhall die." The Prophet is more explicit if poſſible, in the 17th Chap. he there aſſigns the reaſon why the King of Babylon would put out Sedecias's eyes, becauſe he was to break his oath of fidelity. We know from the writer of Chronicles terminating his work that this prophecy was literally fulfilled. In the 29th Chap. is foretold the deſtruction of Egypt during the ſpace of forty years, and after that time its re-eſtabliſhment, but never in its former power or ſplendor. Of the truth of this prophecy we ourſelves are witneſſes. In the 35th Chap. he announces the perpetual deſtruction of the Idumœans, which happened accordingly.

A number of prophecies, againſt which no objection can be ſtated, are paſſed in ſilence, they all have the ſame tendency, that is, to authenticate the miſſion of the Prophets, and enforce obedience to the law of God. In theſe Prophets we find men born at different periods during a ſpace of many centuries, and in different countries, differing in their occupations, placed in the different ranges of life from the Prince on the throne to the Shepherd in the field, yet no contradiction

diction in their writings, no inconſiſtency, a perfect coincidence in all, evidently ſhewing that the ſame ſpirit animated them all. Compare this agreement of the Prophets to the diſputes, the diſſentions, the contradictions of Philoſophers ancient and modern; ſilence, prejudice, paſſion and party ſpirit conſult unbiaſſed reaſon, and it will tell you that the Prophets were directed by the ſpirit of truth, which is one and the ſame in all times, and places; and the Philoſophers under the influence of the ſpirit of error, which ſhifts with every wind.

From ſome texts in the Pentateuch, which appear to have been written after Moſes's death, it was inferred that he was not the author of that work; but if it be conſidered that Moſes foretold many things which happened after his death, this difficulty vaniſhes; he foreſaw and foretold his death, and the manner of his death, why not his funeral? It is true that Moſes ſpeaks of himſelf in the courſe of the work as of an indifferent perſon, and even ſays that he was the moſt meek of men; it is not unuſual for a writer to ſpeak of himſelf in the third perſon: Cæſar gives us a ſpecimen in his commentaries. As to the praiſe which Moſes beſtows on himſelf it was not from himſelf, but from the ſpirit of truth, which influenced and directed him, he in the ſame ſimple manner tells his infidelity at the waters of Meribah, and its conſequent puniſhment death, before he entered the land of promiſe, which he ſo ardently deſired. Never was book more authentic than the Pentateuch, nor author more certain than Moſes: the whole Jewiſh nation atteſt it now, as they did at all times without a diſſentient voice; their different ſects of Phariſees, and Saducees and Libertines, Jews and Samaritans, though diſagreeing in every thing elſe, all agree in this.

All the books, which have been written poſterior

to

to the Pentateuch aſcribe it to Moſes: God ſays to Joſhua, 1 Ch. "take courage, and be very valiant to obſerve, and to fulfil the whole law, which my ſervant Moſes has commanded thee ..... let not the book of this law depart from thy mouth, and thou ſhalt meditate on it day and night, that thou mayeſt obſerve and do all things written in it." The law was therefore written before Joſhua took the command of the Children of Iſrael, and Moſes had delivered it. Four hundred and thirty eight years after, David immediately before his death ſays to his ſon Solomon, 3d. B. of K. Ch. 2. v. 3, "take courage, and be a man, that you may obſerve the obſervances of the Lord your God, that you may walk in his ways and keep his ceremonies, his precepts, his judgments, his teſtimonies as is written in the law of Moſes." The writer of the 4th B. of K. Chap. 21, enumerating the crimes of Manaſſes, ſays, that 'he placed an idol of the grove, which he had made in the temple of the Lord, of which the Lord had ſaid to David and to Solomon his ſon, in this temple and in Jeruſalem, which I have choſen out of all the tribes of Iſrael I will put my name for ever; and I will not remove the foot of Iſrael from this land, which I gave to their fathers, only if they will obſerve to do all, which I have commanded them according to the law, which my ſervant Moſes commanded them." The writer of the 2d. B. of Chronicles, ſpeaking of the celebrated Paſſover, which was obſerved in Joſias's reign, ſays that the ceremonies were obſerved "as is written in the book of Moſes."

In the 1ſt Eſdras, Chap. 3d, it is ſaid, "that they (the Jews) built the Altar of the God of Iſrael, that they might offer *holocauſts* upon it, as is written in the law of Moſes, the man of God." It is uſeleſs to cite more: all the writers of the Old Teſtament as well

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as all the writers of the New Teſtament aſcribe the Pentateuch to Moſes. The Heathen authors aſcribe the Jewiſh religion to Moſes as do the Jews themſelves: Joſephus againſt Appion, Book 1ſt, adduces proofs of the Jewiſh antiquity from the writings of Phenecians, Egyptians and Greeks; and in his Antiquities of the Jews he eſtabliſhes that truth beyond the poſſibility of doubt.

Juſtin, the martyr, in his exhortation to the Greeks, proves to them, from the writings of their anceſtors, that Moſes was far more ancient than their ſages, their hiſtorians, their philoſophers or legiſlators. No. 10, he ſays, theſe things, O Greeks, writers, ſtrangers to our religion, have written concerning the antiquity of Moſes, and they ſaid that they had them from the Egpytian prieſts amongſt whom Moſes was born.

Tatian, in his oration againſt the Greeks, ſays, No. 26, "let Homer be preſent at the Trojan war, and let him have fought with Agamemnon, or let him, if any man deſires it, have lived before letters are ſaid to be found, it is yet manifeſt that Moſes was many years prior to the deſtruction of Troy, as he flouriſhed long before the building of that city, as witneſſes of this truth I ſhall adduce Chaldeans, Phenecians and Egyptians. He proceeds to cite theſe authors, Nos. 36, 37, 38, and No. 41, ſhews that Moſes is more ancient than all the writers known to us before Homer.

Theophilus, in his third book to Autolicus, No. 20 and 21, ſhews the antiquity of Moſes from the writings of Manethon, a famous Egyptian prieſt, which were then extant, but are now loſt. "Though," ſays Theophilus, "he tells many fabulous tales in favour of the Egyptians, and uttered blaſphemies againſt Moſes, and the Hebrews who followed him,

yet from his account it appears that they were nine hundred years before the Trojan war.

Origenes, in his memorable work againſt Celſus the Heathen philoſopher, writes thus, B. 1, No. 16, "I wonder that Celſus, who ranks the Odryſes, the Samothracians, the Hyperborean Cluſini amongſt the moſt wiſe, and ancient nations, does not deign to give the Jews a place either amongſt wiſe, or ancient people, though there be many Egyptians, Phenecians and Greeks, who atteſt their antiquity. It would be uſeleſs to adduce theſe writers whom any perſon may ſee in Joſephus' two books of the Antiquities of the Jews: there many are collected by the author, who give teſtimony of the antiquity of the Jews. The book of the younger Tatian againſt the Gentiles is in every body's hands; in it he, with great erudition, adduces the hiſtorians who atteſt the antiquity of Moſes and the Jews. It is therefore certain that Celſus has no regard to truth, that he is influenced by a ſpiteful hatred to the Chriſtian religion, which derives from the Jews." A man would imagine that this intelligent writer reaſoned againſt a modern philoſophiſt. There is however this difference between Celſus and our modern ſcribblers, that Celſus was deeply verſed in all the ſciences taught in the Heathen ſchools, and offered in defence of error the plauſible reaſons, which his imagination furniſhed; they on the contrary, ignorant in the extreme, are reduced to collect the fragments of his works which yet remain. Theſe they obtrude on the uninformed as the fruits of their deep reſearches into antiquity.

Men of real ſcience minutely diſcuſſing every expreſſion of the Pentateuch, in order to remove that obſcurity, in which events of remote antiquity muſt appear immerſed to the generality of readers, have indirectly enabled our Scioliſts to add to theſe frag-

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ments ſome other ſeeming difficulties againſt the authenticity of that work: thus, for example, it is ſaid in Deut. i. 1, "theſe are the words which Moſes ſpoke to Iſrael beyond the Jordan." Hence it is inferred that this book was written by ſome perſon after the Iſraelites had paſſed the Jordan, but in the original text it is *Beheber* which ſignifies in the paſſage, or oppoſite the paſſage of Jordan, and the ſenſe is determined by the context: the author immediately adds: "in the wilderneſs in the ſolitude oppoſite *Suph*, the Red Sea, between Pharan, and Thophel, and Laban, and Chaſoreth," that is in the wilderneſs where Moſes had given his inſtructions to the anceſtors of theſe men, to whom they were then repeated.

As the laws, which Moſes recapitulated in the book of Deuteronomy and others, which he then ſubjoined, were to be read on every ſeventh year for ſucceeding generations, the ſacred penman ſpeaking of himſelf, might with great propriety have ſaid, "theſe are the words, which Moſes ſpoke beyond the Jordan," hence the tranſlator was perfectly correct, though he did not give preciſely the ſenſe of the original text.

From this and ſimilar expreſſions ſome thought Eſdras author of the Pentateuch, though in his writings the contrary be manifeſt: it is ſaid, 1ſt Eſd. iii. 2, "Joſhua the ſon of Joſedee aroſe and his brethren the prieſts ..... and they built an altar of the God of Iſrael to offer *holocauſts* on it, as it is written in the law of Moſes *Bethorath Moſcheh*, and v. 18, they appointed Prieſts in their orders, and Levites in their turns over the works in Jeruſalem, as it is written in the book of Moſes." The text ſays "as the book of Moſes has written." *Chi chathab ſepher Moſcheh.* This order was given by Moſes, Num. iii. and viii.

In

In the 2d. of Eſd. viii. we read: "the Scribes ſaid to Eſdras, bring the book of the law of Moſes: *Lehabi eth Sepher Thorath Moſcheh* . . . . . And Eſdras the Prieſt brought the law . . . . . and they read in the book, in the law of the Lord, *Beſepher Bthorath*, diſtinctly, and intelligibly. In the text *ſom ſechel*. that is giving the ſenſe of its contents. After the captivity, few if any of the people taken from Judea remained, their children born in Chaldea had corrupted the language of their anceſtors; mixing it with Chaldaic terms, and phraſes, they formed the Syriac language, which they continued to ſpeak to the deſtruction of their Republic. The Hebrew text written by Moſes many of them did not underſtand, Eſdras explained it to them in the language which they underſtood, but left the writen text as he found it. This appears evidently from the many Chaldaic words in the books written by Eſdras, not one of which are to be found in the Pentateuch. It is probable that many copies of the Scripture were deſtroyed when the city and temple were conſumed by fire, but there was an immenſe number of copies in the hands of the Prophets, Prieſts and Levites who eſcaped. It was ordered by Moſes, Deut. XVII. that the King ſhould tranſcribe the law from a copy atteſted genuine by the Prieſts of the Levitical Tribe. Their atteſtation was ſufficient to authenticate the copy. Many copies muſt have been in their hands, nor were they confined to the Tribe of Levi: Moſes gave copies to all the heads of families, Deut. XXXI. It is not in the nature of things that ſo many copies, and authentic tranſcripts, of a book, which contained the public records of the nation, determined the rites and ceremonies of the national religion, ſhould have periſhed.

Names of cities grown obſolete might have been changed with great propriety, though of this we have

have no certainty; the names now in the text might have pre-exiſted: thus it is ſaid in Gen. XIV. 14, "Abraham purſued them (the men who had taken Lot) as far as *Dan*." It would appear from Jud. XVIII. that, this city, in Moſes's time called *Lais*, received the name of *Dan* from the 600 men of that Tribe, who robbed Micha of his idol. If Moſes had written *Lais*, Dan might have been ſubſtituted in after times without any inconvenience. It is more probable that Moſes ſpoke not of the city but of the fountain called Dan: we know from Joſephus, Lib. 1 Cap. 10. de Ant, that the Jordan took its name from two fountains the one called *Jor* the other *Dan*. Moſes adds, ibid. "that Abraham overcame them, and purſued them as far as Chobah to the left of Damaſcus, which place is near the ſources of the Jordan."

In like manner, Hebron which is frequently mentioned in the Pentateuch, is thought to have received its name from *Hebron*, ſon to Caleb after Moſes's death, it had been called of old *Caraith Arbe*, Joſhua XIV. It is plain from the context that it was called Hebron before Caleb's ſon poſſeſſed it; it was not from him therefore that it took the name, but from ſome chieftain of the Canaanites. Joſhua marks that it was called originally *Cariarth Arbe*, which might have been long before Moſes, as the city was built ſeven years before *Tanis*, the moſt ancient city in Egypt, Num. XIII. 23.

An expreſſion, not uncommon in Scripture, *the name continues to the preſent day*, ſeems to indicate a great lapſe of time between the event and the relation of it, yet we find it in St. Matthew who wrote ſhortly after the events, which he relates: "for this the field was called *Haceldama* the field of blood to the preſent day, XXVII. 8. And XXVIII. 15, "this

was

was divulged among the Jews to the present day. In the same manner Moses had said, Deut. III. 14, that the possessions of Jair, son of Manasses, were called *Havoth Jair*, that is the villages of Jair, *to the present day*, thereby signifying that no change had taken place in the name during the lapse of some years previous to his writing.

Other expressions are found in the Pentateuch, which seem to indicate that the writer had lived after the expulsion of the Canaanites: thus it is said, Gen. XII. 6, "Abraham passed over the land to the place of Sechem. The Canaanite was then in the land." And XIII. 7, "the Canaanite and Pherizite were then in the land." The writer if properly understood says simply that they were then established in that country, *az Josheb Baarets*, he neither says nor insinuates that they had been expelled; he indirectly shews the Patriarch's faith and confidence in God, who ventured to sojourn amongst a wicked people, from whose enormity and rapacity he had every thing to fear.

Facts are related in the Pentateuch, which are thought to have happened after the death of Moses, hence it is inferred by some Sciolists that he was not the author, thus we read, Gen. XXXVI. "These are the Kings who reigned in Edom before the children of Israel had a King." And in the XVI. of Exodus, "the Children of Israel eat manna 40 years until they came to the habitable land. They were supported by this food until they came to the borders of Canaan; we know from Joshua, V. 12, that the manna did not cease until after the death of Moses, in the V. 12. of Deut. it is said, "the Horrei dwelt in Seir, whom the Children of Esau expelled, and destroyed and dwelt there, as Israel did in the land of their possession." It is true many facts and events are related by Moses, which

happened

happened after his death, the natural inference is that he was divinely inſpired: for there is but the preſcience of God, which extends to diſtant events depending on contingencies. Moſes therefore might have related the events adduced though taking effect after his death with the ſame certainty that he did many others at more diſtant periods, he foretold that the people of Iſrael after taking poſſeſſion of the promiſed land would conſtitute a King to reign over themſelves, and then preſcribed his duties, Deut. XVII. that they and their King would be carried into captivity, Deut. XXVIII. that there would be a certain place choſen by God for the building of his temple, in which he orders them to offer their ſacrifices not elſewhere, Deut. XII. he alſo charged them to exterminate Amalic when God would give them reſt in the country, which he would ſubject to them, this order was executed by Saul and David. It is not unuſual with the Prophets to ſpeak of events, which they know will infallibly happen, as already paſt. Hence Moſes might have related events, which he knew to be at hand, as if they had already happened. Thus he relates his death, the manner of his death, and the circumſtances attending it. In the ſame manner he might have related the events adduced, though it is probable that ſome of them happened before his death: from the death of Iſaac when Eſau took poſſeſſion of Edom to Moſes's appointment to the ſupreme command of Iſrael, two hundred and thirty ſix years had elapſed, in that time eight Kings might have reigned in Edom, and eleven Chieftains in different departments. That Moſes was King in Iſrael is manifeſt not only from his exerciſing regal authority, but becauſe he is expreſsly called *King* in the XXXIII. 5. of Deut. *va jahi bejishoovour melek.*

Long before his death the Children of Iſrael, had taken

taken poſſeſſion of the kingdoms of Og and Sehon. Moſes had ſaid, Deut. III. 12, 13, " at that time we paſſed the land from Aroer, which is on the bank of the brook Arnon, to the middle of the mountain of Galaad, theſe cities I gave to Reuben and Gad; the remainder of Galaad, and all Baſon of the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half tribe of Manaſſes." He might therefore have ſaid that the Children of Iſrael had expelled the former poſſeſſors of that land, as the children of Eſau had expelled the Horrei from Seir.

Joſeph in priſon had ſaid to Pharaoh's cup bearer that he was brought clandeſtinely from the land of the Hebrews, Gen. XL. This ſhadow is ſeized by our philoſophiſts: the land, ſay they, belonged to the Canaanites, it was called the land of Canaan. This is true of the country at large, but the Hebrews poſſeſſed a part: Abraham's deſcendants were then numerous from the lands which they poſſeſſed. Joſeph had been ſtolen. Add to this that Joſeph well knew that whole country had been promiſed to the Hebrews by God the Sovereign Diſpoſer of all countries. He therefore juſtly called it the land of the Hebrews.

There are in the Pentateuch expreſſions obſcure in themſelves, which are eaſily diſtorted from the intended ſignification. They have been minutely diſcuſſed, and all ſeeming inconſiſtencies ſatisfactorily reconciled, by men the moſt intelligent, and of the moſt profound erudition, a Toſtat, a Calmet, &c.

The malignity of a Celſus, of an apoſtate Julian, had recourſe to the fables of a Manethon, of a Cheremon; a man is ſurpriſed to hear Tacitus aſſert that the object of the Jewiſh worſhip was an aſs's head, this tale he borrowed from Appion's furious declamation againſt the Jews, who refuſed to erect ſtatues to Caligula, or to ſwear by his name. All theſe

fables

fables have been ſolidly refuted by Joſephus, in his books againſt Appion, by Origines againſt Celſus, by Cyril againſt Julian the apoſtate, and other early writers. It was reſerved for modern Sceptics to collect all the fragments of Heathen impiety from theſe works, in which they have been refuted, and to add all, that reſtleſs imagination can ſuggeſt in order to diminiſh, if poſſible, the force of that Divine revelation, which denouncing vengence againſt ſenſuality and vanity, the Philoſophiſt's idols, fills him with terrors and anxiety in this life, and devotes him to excruciating torments in the next.

A man, famous in the annals of modern philoſophy, writing to a brother Atheiſt, wiſhes him ſleep and a good appetite, the only Gods, ſaid he, which I adore. His Divinities were ungrateful: reſtleſs ambition, and its conſequent cares, and fatigues, had baniſhed ſleep from his wearied eyes, and ſatiety had depraved and ruined his voracious appetite, ſo true it is that the impious man is always the victim of his crimes: "*perſecutionem paſſi ab ipſis factis ſuis.*"

The five books of the Pentateuch are perfectly correſpondent, a partial interpolation in one, would have introduced an inconſiſtency with the others, and a total change was impoſſible. Why ſo? Becauſe in theſe books the religious rites and ceremonies of the Jewiſh people, and their civil polity were defined, and the miracles recorded in them were commemorated by ſolemn feſtivals; their deliverance from Egypt, by the feſtival of Eaſter, or, as they called it, the *Paſs over*, becauſe the exterminating Angel, ſeeing the blood of the Paſchal Lamb, paſſed over the houſes of the Iſraelites, whilſt he ſlew the firſt born in every houſe in Egypt, a peſtilence makes no diſtinction between the firſt born, and the ſecond or third. Hence the offering of the firſt born in the Temple, and the

assumption of the whole tribe of Levi in place of all the first born then in being. By what possibility could this whole tribe have been selected for the service of the tabernacle and the temple, and continue in that service until the total destruction of the Jewish republic, in commemoration of this miracle, if no such prodigy had been effected? In like manner the promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai was commemorated by the solemnity of Pentecost; and the Jews were taught to remember that their ancestors lived in tents, by the Feast of Tabernacles. All the books of the Old Testament pre-suppose the law of Moses, refer to it, teach the same morality, which is contained in it, though written in different ages there is a perfect coincidence. Copies of the Pentateuch were given to all heads of families, Deut. XXXI. They were ordered to meditate on the law, and instruct their children in it, Deut. VI. It is cited in a special manner by Josua I. III. XXIII. in the 3 Kings II. in the 4 Kings, XIV. XXIII. Esdras, VIII. Eccl. XXIV. and elsewhere, such was the zeal of the Jews in defence of this law, that they sacrificed life itself rather than renounce it: read the history of the Maccabees: we know with what relentless fury they persecuted the Christians, who first taught that the ceremonial part of the law was abrogated, no change therefore or interpolation was possible during the Jewish dispensation; after the establishment of christianity, if the Jews intended to interpolate or falsify, the Christians would not permit them.

Moses after he had given copies of the law to the priests and to all the heads of families, and ordered it to be read for the people every seventh year at the festival of Tabernacles, directed the Levites to depositt the original in the side of the Ark of the covenant, "it will, said he, be there a witness against you, *baja*

sham

ſham leēd beka, Deut. XXXI. This original *by the hand of Moſes*, 2 Par. XXXIV. 14, which probably was concealed from the fury of Manaſſes and Amon in ſome receſs of the temple, was found by Helkias the high prieſt in the reign of Joſias, 4 Kings, XXII, that Prince amazed and terrified ordered Helkias and others to inquire of the Lord by ſome Prophet, if the calamities denounced againſt the diſobedience of the Jews in the law were then impending. It was anſwered by Holda the propheteſs in the affirmative, ibid. From the amazement and terror of this pious Prince, it is inferred by ſome, that the law had been then forgotten, not reflecting that theſe calamities were at all times known to be denounced againſt diſobedience, yet cauſed no apprehenſion until the appearance of that original by the hand of Moſes, which was depoſited as a witneſs againſt them, from which it was very natural to conclude that the threatened evils were then at hand. Joſias had an additional motive to fear the impending calamities: his father Amon, and his grand father Manaſſes, had publicly profeſſed idolatry, had erected altars to the heathen deities in the temple, and had filled the city with the blood of the faithful who ſteadily adhered to the law, 4 Kings XXI.

To imagine that, becauſe this original in the hand-writing of Moſes was concealed during the turbulent reigns of Manaſſes and Amon, the numberleſs copies and authentic tranſcripts in the hands of the Prieſts, of the Prophets, of the heads of families in the different cities and towns of Judea, were all deſtroyed, is a mere groundleſs conjecture. We know that Joſias was himſelf inſtructed in the law before he ſaw this original: it is ſaid of him, 2 Par. XXXIV. That in the eighth year of his reign, the ſixteenth of his age, he began to ſeek the God of his father David,

and

and the writer of the 4th of Kings, says, XXII. That he walked in all the ways of his father David, he declined neither to the right nor the left," he must have been well instructed in that law, which he so scrupulously observed from the 8th year of his reign to the 18th when the autograph of Moses was found in the temple, ibid.

It is said of Joas, that, at his inauguration, the *testimony*, that is, the Book of the Law, was put into his hands when he was anointed by the High Priest Joiada, 4. K. XI. 13. This ceremony must have been observed at the inauguration of all their Kings, as it was expressly commanded, Deut. XVII. By this law the King was obliged to transcribe the whole of Deuteronomy from a copy delivered to him by the High Priest, though some of their Kings may well be supposed not to comply with the precept, the greater number did, hence the law could not be forgotten in the court, much less in the temple, and the public schools, where it was diligently taught and explained by the Jewish Priests and Doctors. During the long reign of Ezechias the law was strictly observed, and though his immediate successor Manasses, in the early part of his reign, had introduced idols into the temple, and persecuted the faithful, yet after his captivity he removed them, and steadily persevered in the observance of the law to his death, 2. Par. XXXIII. His successor Amon reigned but two years, during which time, however well disposed, he could not obliterate the law. Josias's reign was long. From his death to the invasion of Nebuchonosor but four years elapsed; this short space, and the whole time of the captivity, which followed, was celebrated by the writings and instructions of the great Prophets Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel, Habaccuc, &c. who not only observed the law of Moses, and preserved that, and the writings of former

former prophets, but added to them the books which bear their names.

Daniel was yet living when Cyrus took poſſeſſion of Babylon, Dan. V. Who in the firſt year of his reign ſent Zorobabel ſon of Salathiel, and Joſua the ſon of Joſedec, the high prieſt, with all the Prieſts, Levites and others, who were deſirous of returning to Jeruſalem, in order to build the temple. That theſe were well verſed in the law we know from, 1 Eſd. III. 2, where it is ſaid, "and Joſua the ſon of Joſedec, and his brethren the Prieſts, ſtood up, and Zorababel ſon of Salathiel and his brethren, and they built an altar of the God of Iſrael, to offer on it *holocauſts*, as is written in the law of Moſes the man of God." That the records of the nation were regularly kept is plain from this, that ſome, who aſcended could not prove their deſcent; and that the ſons of the Prieſts, that is the children of Hobai, who could not produce the record of their geneology were diſmiſſed from the Prieſthood; "They ſought the writing of their geneology, and did not find it, and were rejected from the Prieſthood." 1 Eſd. II. 62. If the regiſtry of births and marriages was kept, it is a wild conjecture to think that the book of the law, the public record of the whole nation, was loſt, or that the ſcriptures, in the hands of both Prieſts and Prophets, were deſtroyed.

In Zorobabel's time we find the Prophets Aggeus and Zacharias inſtructing and encouraging the people. Theſe men did not loſe ſight of the law, nor did they permit the prophetic writings of their predeceſſors to be forgotten, deſtroyed or interpolated; ſhortly after Eſdras was appointed to conduct the Jews. He was thought by ſome good men, deceived by rabbinical fables, to have reinſtated the whole of the Scriptures; there might have been inaccuracies in

different

different copies through the neglect, inadvertence or ignorance of tranſcribers, which he corrected; and he is thought, upon good grounds, to have ſubſtituted the Chaldaic to the primitive Hebrew characters, in order to break the intercourſe between the Jews and Samaritans, who always retained the old Hebrew character in the Pentateuch, the only part of the Scriptures in their hands; but the Scriptures were in the hands of the Prieſts, the natural guardians, and keepers of right of theſe public records before his time, in his time, and after it, and they will continue in the hands of their ſucceſſors in office, until the end of time.

The authenticity of the *Old Law* received additional force from the *New*: the latter being the completion and perfection of the former. All the Moſaic rites and ceremonies were figurative of the Chriſtian diſpenſation. It was promiſed by all the Prophets, the moſt remarkable event, immediately preceding the eſtabliſhment announced by the patriarch Jacob, Gen. XLI. 10. The time determined by Daniel, IX. 24. The inſtitution, therefore, literally verifying theſe prophecies, ſhews them to have been divinely inſpired, it is therefore more than ſufficient to ſilence impiety, if impiety, the reſult of ignorance, vanity and ſenſuality, could be ſilent.

The revelation contained in the books of the New Teſtament, if conſidered attentively, and diſpaſſionately, will appear of divine original. The ſimplicity of its ſtyle invites and charms, whilſt the ſublimity of its truths, the perfection of its maxims, the obſcurity of its myſteries, aſtoniſh the true Philoſopher; it intelligibly inſtructs him in all his duties, whilſt it teaches him to captivate his underſtanding, and fix the inconſtancy of his will; it ſhews him the neceſſity of confining his reaſon to objects within his ſphere,

and

and the danger of launching out into the regions of imagination in purſuit of diſcoveries, which reaſon cannot make.

In this revelation the Philoſopher finds, and the child with equal certainty and eaſe, that God is the Creator of all things, viſible and inviſible: all things were made by him, John i. that he alone poſſeſſes immortality from the neceſſity of his nature, that to the created intelligence he is incomprehenſible: "who alone poſſeſſes immortality and dwells in inacceſſible light," 1ſt. Tim. VI. 16; that his power and divinity is eternal, Rom. i. 20; that he is perfectly immutable in his decrees as in his nature: with whom there is no change nor ſhadow of viciſſitude, James i. 17; that he is perfectly free and totally independent on his creatures: "who was his counſellor? Or who hath given to him previouſly, and a recompence ſhall be made? From him, and by him, and to him are all things," Rom. XI. 35, 36. That as firſt beginning and laſt end he is alſo the Sovereign Arbiter of all his creatures, diſpoſing of them according to his will: "who worketh all things according to the counſel of his will, Eph. i. 11; that his providence ſuperintends and directs the univerſe, ſo that nothing can happen without his immediate direction: a ſparrow is not forgotten by him, Luke xii. 6. He feeds the birds of the air, ibid. Not one of them falls to the ground but by his order, Matt. x. 29. The hairs of our heads are numbered by him, and under his inſpection, ibid.; that he alone is poſſeſſed of immenſity: "in him we live, and are moved, and exiſt," Acts XVII. 28; that his mercy knows no bounds; hence the Apoſtle calls him Father of Mercies, 2. Cor. i. 3: "be you merciful as your father is merciful," Luke vi. 3, 6: "for the Lord is merciful and compaſſionate," James v. 11; "that he

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is juſt and true in all his ways: "thy ways are juſt and true, King of Ages," Rev. XV. 3; that he is the avenger of crimes: "vengeance is mine and I will repay," Rom. XII. 19:" the Lord knows how to deliver the godly from temptation, but to reſerve the unjuſt to the day of judgment to be tormented," 2d Pet. ii. 9, in a word, that he is poſſeſſed of all perfection. This revelation after having given the moſt ſublime idea of God, which the mind can conceive, ſtates man's original dignity, and deſtination; then adds the ſource of all the calamities, to which he is ſubject in his fallen ſtate; the prevarication of our firſt parents: "by one man ſin entered into the world, and by ſin death," Rom. v. 12, hence; that innumerable train of conſequent evils, which terminate in that greateſt of all evils death. Thus the unlearned find, what the Heathen Philoſophers ſought in vain, the cauſe of that violent inclination to ſenſible objects, the emptineſs and vanity of which, though known to the Heathens was not ſufficient to check the ardour of their wild purſuits. In this, however, they were more excuſable than their ſucceſſors, our modern Sciolifts, of whom it cannot be ſaid that they did not know, but that perverſe obſtinacy, and unbridled ſenſuality has effaced from their minds a truth which they muſt have known.

If it be neceſſary to know the ſource of our woes, it is of yet greater conſequence to know the remedy; in this revelation we find it; the boundleſs mercy, and inexpreſſible goodneſs of God, has given us a Redeemer, who at the expence of his blood has reconciled us. From this revelation we know that his ſatisfaction was full and ſufficient; that when applied to us by faith, and the ſacraments of his inſtitution, it perfectly reinſtates us; that we may have recourſe to it, if neceſſary, more than once in the courſe

courſe of life. From this revelation we know the homage which God exacts : " God is a Spirit, and they who adore him muſt adore him in ſpirit and truth," John IV. 24. " Thou ſhalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind," Luke X. 27," that is, in two words : thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God ſincerely, and in preference to every thing which is not God. Though this precept, which radically includes all other precepts, be extremely difficult, yet the reaſon is irreſiſtible, and the precept is indiſpenſable on the principles of reaſon : our love to any object ought to be proportioned to the goodneſs of the object in itſelf, and our gratitude proportioned to favours received. God is in himſelf the ſource of all goodneſs ; from him, and at his will, we hold all, that we poſſeſs, our exiſtence, and its continuance ; to him, therefore, we owe the homage of our ſouls and bodies, of our underſtanding, our will, of all that we poſſeſs. To our obedience he promiſes a reward great beyond meaſure : that is, the light of glory, which will ſhew us truth in itſelf, goodneſs and beauty in its ſource ; againſt diſobedience this revelation denounces the moſt terrific ſentence, that is an eternal excluſion from this light of glory accompanied with other torments proportioned to the number and enormity of tranſgreſſions. " That you may be judged worthy of the kingdom of God, for which alſo you ſuffer ; ſeeing it is juſt with God to repay affliction to thoſe, who oppreſs you, and to you, who are oppreſſed relaxation with us, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven with the Angels of his power in a flame of fire, giving puniſhment to thoſe, who know not God, and who do not obey the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,

who ſhall ſuffer eternal pains in deſtruction from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," 2. Theſs. I. 5. and ſeq.

To create man's confidence, it repreſents this our God ſo great, ſo powerful, ſo rich in mercy, as an indulgent father: our father who art in Heaven, Matt. vi. 9. "ſee the grace which the father has given us, that we ſhould be called the children of God.....we are now the children of God," 1 John. iii. 1, 2.

To engage us to have recourſe to him, it promiſes that whatever we aſk conducing to our welfare, now and hereafter, he will grant it, "whatever you aſk the father in my name, that will I do," John xiv, 13.

To prevent deſpair when paſſion overpowers, or the tempter ſeduces, it promiſes pardon to ſincere repentance, nor does it confine this grace to any limited number of transgreſſions, or to any limited number of times, "whoſe ſins you forgive they are forgiven," John xx. 23.

The incertainty of the term of accompt, is propoſed as a check to preſumption: "Be you then alſo ready, for at what hour you think not the ſon of man will come," Luke xii. 40.

In this revelation we find all the perfections which human reaſon, neither warped by prejudice, nor clouded by paſſion, may diſcover, and others to which reaſon unaſſiſted by a ſuperior light cannot extend, we find all the duties which theſe perfections impoſe, and alſo all the relative duties, which man's place in the creation, and his original deſtination, aſſign him. As a child of God and heir to his Kingdom, he is ordered to perſiſt in the exerciſe of all theſe virtues, which adorn the ſoul, and give it a diſtant reſemblance to its heavenly father, univerſal benevolence without diſtinction of friends or enemies: "thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf," Matt. xix. 19;

"Love

" Love your enemies, do good to thoſe who hate you, bleſs thoſe who curſe you, and pray for thoſe who calumniate you....and you ſhall be the children of the moſt high, for he is beneficent to the unthankful and to the wicked," Luke vi. 33...Mercy: " Be you merciful becauſe your father is merciful," 36. Humility and meekneſs: "Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart," Matt. xi. 29.

In this quality of child of God ſanctity is ſtrictly enjoined, which excludes every poſſible vice: " ſeek peace with all men, and ſanctification, without which no man will ſee God," Heb. xii. 14. Chaſtity is in a particular manner enjoined: "the oppoſite vice being from its nature incompatible with ſanctity excludes from the inheritance of the children of God," 1. Cor. vi.

In this revelation man is taught his abſolute, and relative duties, in every ſituation of life; as a prince, as a ſubject, as a magiſtrate, a citizen, as a father, a huſband, as a free man, a bondman; every age, every ſex, every range of life, find in it rules of conduct, which extort the approbation of impiety. It is true our ſciolifts complain of the rigid ſeverity of its maxims; highway-men complain of the ſeverity of the laws. The laws, which proportion puniſhments to the atrocity of crimes are not the leſs wiſe though the highway-man may think otherwiſe; the maxims of the Goſpel are not the leſs venerable becauſe impiety diſregards them: if they countenanced impiety, they would ceaſe to be what they are, that is, maxims of holineſs, worthy the ſanctity and wiſdom of their author; they alſo complain of the obſcurity of its myſteries. In this they ſhew their ignorance: of all myſteries that of the Trinity is the moſt obſcure; yet 'tis not more difficult to conceive the divine nature in three perſons than in one: the divine nature is in itſelf and in all its attributes impenetrable to the created

ted underſtanding. It is not more ſo in three perſons than in one: the man who pretends to meaſure the immenſity of the divinity by his own limited underſtanding expoſes both his pride and ignorance at the ſame time.

From ſome expreſſions in the inſpired writings, which intimate that God extends his mercy to ſome, whilſt he exerciſes the ſeverity of his juſtice on others; that he ſeems deſirous of ſaving ſome, not others; that he confers extraordinary favors on ſome, and ſends afflictions and calamities to others, the ſpirit of error pretends to concludeagainſt the authenticity of the work, ſuch partiality being, ſay its abettors, inconſiſtent with juſtice. It has been already obſerved that juſtice does not exclude clemency; that God is not ſaid to be ſovereignly juſt becauſe he never pardons, but becauſe he is ſtrictly obſervant of the rules of juſtice in his judgments: he never condemns the innocent, nor does the puniſhment, which he inflicts on the delinquent, exceed the malice of the offence. If on condition of ſincere repentance he forgives an offender, it is an act of mercy, from which none are excluded, but theſe, who exclude themſelves. The obſtinate delinquent, and ſincere penitent are not equally entitled to mercy: clemency pleads for the one, while juſtice claims the other. In this there is nothing which reaſon does not approve.

That God deſires to ſave ſome, not others, is not true: he ſincerely deſires to ſave all, as is expreſsly marked in the Scriptures: St. Paul directs his diſciple Timothy to have prayers and ſupplications offered up for all men: "for this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour, who wills all men to be ſaved," 1. Tim. II. 3—4. Why then are not all men ſaved, ſince God's will is irreſiſtible? God's abſolute will is irreſiſtible; but he does not abſolutely will to

ſave

ſave men againſt their will; he ſincerely deſires them to be ſaved, if they will co-operate with the aſſiſtance which he offers, and have recourſe to the means which he has inſtituted for that end. There is nothing more reaſonable.

That he confers extraordinary favours on ſome is true, that he afflicts others is equally true. In the diſtribution of extraordinary favours there can be no injuſtice, no acceptation of perſons: where there is no title there can be no claim. In this diſtribution he manifeſts the riches of his magnificence, and his perfect independence on his creatures, liberally beſtowing favours without merit, or title, according to his will. If he afflicts the juſt man, it is to chaſtiſe paſt iniquity, or to prevent foreſeen tranſgreſſions, or perhaps to diſengage his affections from a life, in which there is nothing but emptineſs and vanity; if he ſends calamities to the impious, it is to puniſh, or reſtrain evil, rightly conſidered it is rather an act of mercy than of juſtice. The untimely end of a remorſeleſs Tyrant prevents him from adding to his iniquity, and thereby encreaſing the meaſure of his torments, which Divine juſtice will proportion to the number and enormity of his exceſſes.

Words being the ſigns of ideas, as we can have no adequate idea of the Divinity, or of the Divine attributes, we can have no terms to expreſs them correctly. From this limitation of our ideas, and conſequent defect in our language, the terms in uſe being appropriated to objects, which we know, convey our thoughts, but are not ſufficiently expreſſive of the Divine nature; hence the neceſſity of underſtanding all expreſſions applied to the Divinity in the moſt perfect ſenſe, and excluding every imperfection and limitation which the expreſſion applied to its appropriate object may convey. This defect in

language

language has introduced the neceſſity of having recourſe to metaphorical expreſſions, theſe are multiplied for ornament, as well as uſe, in all languages, more particularly amongſt the Orientals. The Scriptures abound with ſtrong metaphors, thereby ſupplying the native defect of language, and conveying an idea of the magnificence and power of God, which though not commenſurate with either, is the utmoſt effort of the human mind. In theſe metaphorical expreſſions, the different paſſions of anger, of jealouſy, of indignation, of repentance, &c. are aſcribed to the Divinity, by which no more is ſignified, or intended, but that God's conduct to the obedient, or diſobedient, appears ſuch as ours, in ſimilar circumſtances, under the influence of theſe paſſions, which are incompatible with the Divine nature, which of courſe he cannot feel.

Ignorance only can miſtake theſe metaphorical expreſſions, which aſcribe hands, eyes, &c. to the Divinity: when, in common diſcourſe, we ſay of a man that his head is good, we are underſtood to ſpeak of the ſtrength of his underſtanding, or if we ſay, his heart is bad, it is underſtood of the perverſeneſs of his will. Thus the arm of God, conveys an idea of his power, the throne of God, ſignifies his majeſty, the eyes of God, his providential vigilance over his creatures, and attention to them.

In the new law are found ambiguous expreſſions, which are thought favourable to diſſenting ſects of Chriſtians, even to Deiſts, Mahometans and Atheiſts. This, if we believe our Sciolifts, is a prejudice againſt the law.

In the new law are ſome expreſſions, which, from the nature of the ſublime truths which they convey, areobſcure, others, which the perverſe obſtinacy of diſſenting ſects, diſtorts from their intended ſignification,

tion, affixing to them a ſenſe, which coincides with their pre-conceived opinions; many, who will not ſhape their conduct according to the maxims of the law, impiouſly endeavour to ſhape the law according to the maxims of their conduct. In the law there is no defect, no danger; in the perverſeneſs of their own will they find ruin. If inſtead of diſtorting the law to their opinions, and bending it to their will, they would correct their errors by the law, and conform their will to its dictates, they would find in it a ſource of happineſs, and all diſſentions would ceaſe.

To inſtitute a compariſon between the heathen morality, and that of the chriſtian law, is a groſs abſurdity: their pretended divinities were the inventions of fancy, infected with all the vices, to which their inventors were addicted; the moſt violent and deſtructive paſſions were perſonified, and honored with temples, in which crimes, at which nature recoils, were committed, not only with impunity, but with religious ſolemnity. Amongſt their great divinities were parricides, proſtitutes, drunkards, bullies. Even the highway-man had recourſe to his mercury for ſucceſs in his undertakings.

Theſe pretended divinities by their example authorized and encouraged licentiouſneſs, and the miniſters of their temples by their precepts and their religious rites. Tatian, in his oration againſt the Greeks, No. 20, ſays: "I diſregarded your inſtitutions, becauſe there ought to be but one common form of living; amongſt you there are as many different inſtitutions as there are cities; actions infamous in the one are honorable in others." Matrimonial connections with mothers are forbidden amongſt the Greeks, they are honored by the Perſians; ſodomy is condemned by the Barbarians, authorized by the Romans, for whoſe pleaſures flocks of boys are brought to market

market like horſes. Such was the morality of the predeceſſors of our modern philoſophiſts. The man who approves will imitate when the occaſion offers. It is rather unlucky for the modern race of heathens, that in chriſtian countries the laws will not permit them to imitate their anceſtors with impunity.

That in the works of the Heathen philoſophers there are ſome precepts of morality is true. Firſt principles of the natural law are deeply impreſſed in the mind; they are not eaſily effaced; the conſequences, which are immediately inferred from theſe principles, the heathen philoſophers found, not in accredited fables, but in the light of reaſon, which was not totally extinct; remote conſequences are of more difficult acceſs: their precepts did not extend to them; if any did, they were borrowed from the ſcriptures: "which of your poets, or which of your ſophiſts," ſaid Tertullian in his apology, "did not drink of the fountain of the prophets?" The moral precepts of Epictetus are manifeſtly borrowed from the Goſpel, which he muſt have ſeen, yet the pretended virtues of this celebrated ſtoic are as oppoſite to true chriſtian virtues as darkneſs to light: Virtuous actions are diſtinguiſhed by their motives; that of the chriſtian is univerſal benevolence; that of the ſtoic, the moſt refined ſelf love and cold inſenſibility, his invariable maxim is "think of yourſelf; ſacrifice every thing to yourſelf." In the corrupt ſyſtem of Epicurus there is no maxim more baſe or dangerous to ſociety.

To their moral precepts the heathen ſages added the moſt groſs errors; thus we find the famed Plato directing the inhabitants of his imaginary republic to take their wives in common; add to this, that their precepts were confined to men of ſcience, the eloquence of a Plato, or of a Cicero, the philoſophical reaſoning

reaſoning of an Ariſtotle, the lectures of a Socrates, or a Seneca are uſeleſs to the unlettered Peaſant. In the inſpired writings rules of action are taught in language intelligible to all claſſes without diſtinction; and by the inſtitution of miniſters, ample proviſion made for the inſtruction of the moſt illiterate; hence the unlettered chriſtian knows all his relative duties with greater preciſion than the heathen philoſopher.

It is frequently urged againſt the evangelical law, that its precepts are ſevere; that they preſcribe a total mortification of our ſenſes and paſſions; that an exact obſervance of them is inconſiſtent with the laws and welfare of ſociety; ruinous to trade and population; inimical to arts and ſciences; encouraging apathy, inſenſibility, alienation of affection from our parents, friends and country.

It is admitted that the precepts of the evangelical law are ſtrict and even ſevere; they enjoin every virtue, and prohibit every vice, denouncing vengeance againſt iniquity under the purple or in rags, without diſtinction, or diſcrimination. They exact ſanctity, becauſe their author is holy, and their object is to ſanctify; if they countenanced vice they would be unworthy of ſuch an author, and unfit for his purpoſe.

There is nothing more reaſonable than the mortification which they enjoin: to repreſs the tumultuous paſſions of anger, avarice, ambition, envy, jealouſy, ſenſuality, and vanity, ſo fatal to mankind, argues the perfection of the Law, and the wiſdom of the Legiſlator, who applies the remedy to the ſource of the evil. The man, who pretends that to gratify theſe paſſions is either lawful, laudable, innocent or uſeful, is not to be reaſoned with, but confined with lunatics, or malefactors.

If the Chriſtian be told in the Goſpel that he muſt

hate his father and mother, the ſenſe of the precept is obvious : that is, if they order any thing contrary to the Law of God, or the Law of the Land, he muſt not obey them ; if they endeavour to divert him from the duty, which he owes this Univerſal Father, he muſt diſregard their injunctions, but yet remember that in all things, not contrary to the Law of God, he muſt love and obey them : the Chriſtian who knows that he muſt love his enemies, cannot think of hating his parents or friends, but he muſt not prefer them to his God ; hence the Redeemer ſays, Matt. X. 37 : " he that loves his father or his mother better than me, is not worthy of me."

This reaſoning is applicable to many other precepts of the ſame nature : thus the injunction of renouncing all poſſeſſions in the world to be a true diſciple of Chriſt is underſtood of the diſpoſition of the mind, and preparation of the heart, to ſacrifice every thing, even life itſelf, rather than diſobey the Lord or deny him ; than which there is no precept more reaſonable : a man of honor would rather ſacrifice his life than betray his King or Country. The actual renunciation of wealth, or power, lawfully acquired, is not of precept, but of counſel, to which none are obliged but they who chuſe a more perfect ſtate of life : without it ſalvation is attainable : this appears from the Saviour's anſwer to the young man, who aſked what he ſhould do to be ſaved ? " If you wiſh to enter into life keep the commandments." After telling him the commandments, which muſt be obſerved, he adds, " if you deſire to be perfect, go ſell all you have, give to the Poor. . . . . Come and follow me," Matt. XIX. The Saviour clearly diſtinguiſhes the precepts of indiſpenſable neceſſity to enter into life, from this counſel, by the obſervance of which, the young man would have

arrived

arrived at a greater degree of perfection, and obtained what the Saviour called *a Treasure in Heaven.*

There are other precepts in the Gospel, which appear extremely severe, yet upon investigation they are found perfectly consistent with reason, and wisely instituted. Thus, when the Saviour says, Matt. V, "If a man strike you on the right cheek turn to him the other; if he contends with you in judgment for your coat, let him take your cloak also." Patience in injuries is enjoined; individuals are prohibited from doing themselves justice by private authority, than which there is nothing more reasonable. The public Magistrate is not forbidden to redress injuries, and do justice to the sufferer, on the contrary, he is ordered to do it: "he is the minister of God .... he does not hold the sword in vain ..... the avenger to execute wrath on him who doeth evil," Rom. XIII. 4—5. As the minister of God he exercises on criminals that vindictive justice, which belongs to God, and, of course, to these exclusively who are authorised by him: "Vengeance is mine and I will repay," Rom. XII. 19. Nor is the sufferer forbidden to have recourse to the public Magistrate for redress, if he be influenced by the love of justice, not by a desire of revenge, which is never lawful, and is at all times strictly prohibited. Vexatious law-suits are strictly forbidden. If redress can be obtained in justice without fraud, without injury to the adverse party, without hatred, animosity, slander, disunion, or breach of christian charity, it is not forbidden to institute a law-suit for redress of injury; if not it is prudent to decline it: because no redress, which can be obtained, is an equivalent for the Divine displeasure incurred by sin. This shews the wisdom of these counsels,

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which our Sciolists think severe, and even unreasonable.

That the evangelical law is inimical to arts and sciences is a groundless surmise, refuted by experience: if arts and sciences be known, it is in these countries where that law prevails; in the eastern countries the most barbarous ignorance has succeeded its suppression.

If fraud, usury and circumvention, be useful to trade; honesty, sincerity and plain dealing, destructive; or if unbounded licentiousness encrease population, whilst regularity ruins it, the evangelical law must be acknowledged defective; he must be fond of delusion who believes such nonsense, and may be consigned to his dreams without interruption.

That stoical apathy, insensibility and alienation of affection, which philosophists find in the evangelical law, was remarked by the heathens—its disciples were absent from the orgies of Bacchus; they were strangers to the mysterious rites of Ceres; their wives and daughters were not brought in solemn procession to the temple of Venus, nor did they range themselves amongst Gladiators; these fashionable amusements they resigned to the memorable ancestors of our modern sciolists. Why complain of us? We imitate our ancestors. They were insensible to criminal excesses, which the voice of reason condemns; but their affection to their parents, to their friends, to their country, their anxiety for their welfare, their exertions to procure relief in the public calamities, in a word, their charity knew no bounds; that is the apathy enjoined in the new law: this is a language which vanity and sensuality dislike.

Some have secluded themselves from society in penitential silence to atone for past offences, or to avoid dangerous occasions; others to contemplate the works

works of the divinity, the joys of heaven, the horrors of hell, the abyſs of eternity. The reader will pardon this unſeaſonable intruſion of terms ſo offenſive to the atheiſt, the deiſt, the modern philoſopher; for this ſecluſion there is no precept; we may admire, but are not obliged, in many caſes not allowed, to imitate them: what is laudable in one, is not ſo in all: if a man be free from all engagements he may live in retirement; if his cares be neceſſary to ſociety, he cannot do it with propriety, amongſt the diſciples of the evangelical law no man lives for himſelf: that privilege they reſign to pretended philanthrophiſts. The perfection, which the law requires, conſiſts in a ſtrict obſervance of its precepts. The obſervance of its councils may, and frequently does, remove impediments, it is therefore lawful and laudable but not neceſſary.

In this divine law the man of reflection diſcovers the ſource of all his calamities; he ſees the ſtate of infirmity, to which the unprovoked tranſgreſſion of the founder of the human race has reduced all his deſcendants; the clouds, which it has diffuſed in the underſtanding, and that ſtate of debility and inconſtancy, in which it has placed the will; the irreſiſtible inclination to ſenſible objects, the overbearing preſſure of concupiſcence, againſt which reaſon ſpeaks in vain: "I ſee and approve what is right, and do what is wrong," and what is yet of greater conſequence, in this law, he finds the only effectual remedy; he is taught to have recourſe to a God of mercy for aſſiſtance, whoſe grace diſpels the clouds of the underſtanding, fixes the inconſtancy of the will, heals its infirmity, inſures a power of reſiſtance ſuperior to the preſſure of concupiſcence, ſoftens theſe tumultuous paſſions, which torment the impious man, impoſes on them an abſolute ſilence, or at leaſt makes them ſubject to reaſon. There

There are truths announced in this law which tranſcend reaſon, hence the ſcioliſt infers that they are contrary to reaſon. The inference only ſpeaks his ignorance: all truths, which regard the divinity, and the divine attributes, muſt of neceſſity tranſcend reaſon: becauſe the divine nature is not within the ſphere of reaſon's activity.

An aſſertion is contrary to reaſon, and contrary to truth, when the idea of the ſubject and the idea of the attribute, both preciſely known, exclude each other; thus to aſſert that a circle is a ſquare, is a manifeſt abſurdity, becauſe the known properties of theſe figures exclude each other; but if the eſſential properties of the ſubject, or of the attribute, be not accurately known, reaſon cannot pronounce whether they be conſiſtent or inconſiſtent, whether they exclude each other or not: thus when it is ſaid that in the divine nature there are three divine perſons, as the divine nature and the divine perſons are totally incomprehenſible to us, reaſon, unaſſiſted by a ſuperior light, can neither pronounce the propoſition true nor falſe; and as reaſon can inſtitute no compariſon between objects, which are known, and theſe which are not, ſo it can inſtitute no compariſon between objects within its graſp and theſe which tranſcend it, the length of a mile might be compared to the heat of the ſun with equal propriety, or rather with leſs abſurdity.

Though by reaſoning we cannot arrive at truths, which tranſcend the force of reaſon, or, if you will, of our limited faculty of reaſoning, yet there is nothing more reaſonable than to believe theſe truths on the authority of Revelation: a peaſant would be thought inconſiderate, if he refuſed to believe an inference deduced by an able mathematician from principles as inconceivable to the peaſant, as the truths of religion;

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if he refuſed to believe the truth inferred until he clearly conceived the principles, he would be diſmiſſed with contempt as an obſtinate blockhead. The alluſion is juſt: many revealed truths are inferences from principles evident to the divinity, incomprehenſible to us. Men of true ſcience modeſtly admit the truth on the authority of the divine word; the ſcioliſt in imitation of the peaſant, whoſe obſtinacy is the natural reſult of pride, and ignorance, will not believe if he does not comprehend. The man of ſcience confines his reaſoning to the proper object: he does not preſume to contradict the divinity: he inquires whether the truth propoſed to his belief be revealed or not; whether the proofs adduced be ſufficient to found a prudential aſſent, if ſo he does not doubt the veracity of his Creator, knowing well that God can do what he cannot conceive, of this he has unqueſtionable evidence in all the works of God, not one of which he comprehends. The Scioliſt on the contrary conſults his pride not his reaſon: he does not inquire whether the propoſed truth be revealed or not, but as he cannot conceive principles, which are inconceivable, and will not admit that Almighty power tranſcends his own, or that truths are known to God of which he is ignorant, he rejects the truth without farther diſcuſſion. It is doubtful whether pride or ignorance be the more prominent feature in impiety. Nothing is wanted to make it contemptible.

The ſanctity of the law, and its tendency to perfect human nature, is manifeſt from the reaſons on which the Scioliſt founds his objections againſt it: the mortification which it preſcribes, ſays he, deſtroys the natural liberty of our will and all our faculties of action; the propoſal of incomprehenſible doctrines deprives us of the uſe of our underſtanding;

ing ; the injunction of reſting all our cares on Providence, reduces us to a ſtate of torpid inſenſibility. The contradictories would have been logically deduced from the principles admitted, if the Scioliſt knew how to reaſon. More than once we have been told by theſe ſcribblers, that man is a ſort of monkey. Their wild declamation reſembles the chattering of that miſchievous animal. However, as it is reaſon, which diſtinguiſhes man from all other animals, even from Atheiſts and Deiſts if they be claſſed with monkeys, it is reaſon which determines human nature, hence whatever is under the direction of reaſon tends to perfect human nature, and whatever tranſgreſſes the bounds of reaſon, and contradicts its dictates, vitiates and corrupts it. If diſorderly affections be called paſſions, as they are contrary to order and the dictates of reaſon, they vitiate and corrupt ; virtue muſt exiſt without them. The mortification of theſe is therefore indiſpenſably neceſſary to perfect human nature ; but if the inclinations of the ſenſitive appetite be thought paſſions they are the ſubject matter to which the exerciſe of virtue is confined : virtue conſiſts in directing them to their proper objects, and preventing tranſgreſſions of the bounds, which reaſon preſcribes : in this conſiſts that mortification, which the evangelical law recommends. To direct the operations of the will, and all the powers of action ſubject to the will, is not to deſtroy its liberty, but to deliver it from ſlavery. Thus a man's liberty is not reſtrained becauſe he is not allowed to ſeduce his neighbour's wife, or forcibly ſeize his poſſeſſions : he poſſeſſes no ſuch liberty ; in the act his will is a ſlave to a diſorderly affection, which corrupts nature, becauſe it is contrary to that reaſon, which conſtitutes it.

Nature has wiſely annexed to all the operations neceſſary

neceſſary to the preſervation of the individual, and the conſervation of the ſpecies, a certain pleaſing ſenſation. Exceſſes and defects are forbidden by reaſon, as deſtructive of the end: hence intoxication and licentiouſneſs are evidently vicious: that mortification which retrenches them perfects human nature, or, at leaſt, prevents its corruption. The writer ſpeaks of men, not of monkeys, or of two-legged animals of the monkey kind

This reaſoning is applicable to the human underſtanding: It is perfected by truth, corrupted by falſhood; if truths be propoſed which tranſcend its limited force of action, and light be infuſed to increaſe its powers, inſtead of enſlaving the underſtanding this frees it from the dominion of error, enables it to act with greater energy, and diſcuſs, with greater accuracy, ſubjects within its own ſphere. Thus objects, which are inviſible to the naked eye, become viſible by the aſſiſtance of a glaſs; and objects which are already ſeen, become more clearly defined: in like manner the underſtanding, aſſiſted by a ſuperior light, not only diſcovers truths, which tranſcend its native powers, but alſo ſees more clearly theſe which are within its inveſtigation.

All faculties are to be confined to their proper objects: the eye is not made to hear, nor the ear to ſee, however the force of either may be increaſed; no extenſion of its powers can enable the eye to hear, or the ear to ſee, nor can they act at all without the aſſiſtance of light for the eye, and ſound for the ear.

As to that ſtate of inſenſibility to which religion reduces its votaries, it is merely imaginary: vain ſolicitude and excruciating anxiety are forbidden, the neceſſary cares and vigilance preſcribed. It is forbidden to make wealth or power the ultimate end of our purſuits: "do not lay up treaſures on earth.....but in

Heaven," Mat. VI, 19–20—It is not allowed to ſerve God in view of theſe; it is alſo forbidden to deſpair of divine aſſiſtance in lawful purſuits; "Your father knows that you want thoſe things," *ibid.* Confidence in our own exertions, independently on the divine aſſiſtance, is ſtrictly and juſtly prohibited; "Which of you can add to his ſtature one cubit?" *ibid.* An over anxious care, previous to the neceſſary time, is alſo forbidden: "Be not ſolicitous for to-morrow," *ibid.* The man who believes a Providence to exiſt, to ſuperintend and direct human affairs, attends to all the relative duties of his condition with vigilance and attention, and reſts on Providence for ſucceſs without anxiety or agitation.

As the great object of the evangelical law is to inſtruct, and conduct its votaries, by ſanctity of life, to a holy and ſupernatural end, its precepts are proportioned to that end; they enforce ſanctity beyond the reach of human laws; they, in order to eradicate evil, forbid all unlawful deſires, from theſe iniquitous actions reſult. Human laws are confined to actions which are public, they cannot reach the mind nor what is concealed. They puniſh the effect, but leave the cauſe untouched. Add to this, that the moral precepts of the Goſpel, which enforce the practice of virtue, are always proportioned to the powers of action in its diſciples, which in ſome are greater, in others leſs; for the powers of action in every agent reſult, or, at leaſt, are increaſed by the habit acquired, and this habit is ſtrengthened by a repetition of acts; hence a perſon advanced in virtue finds no difficulty in that which to the vicious is impracticable, and to theſe, who enter on a virtuous life, if not impracticable, extremely difficult. What is tolerable in the one is reprehenſible in the other. Human laws are made for the multitude, of whom a great majority are imperfect,

fect, if not vicious; they prohibit but ſuch actions as are prejudicial to ſociety: they cannot enforce the practice of virtue. The precepts of the divine law not only prohibit every poſſible vice, whether public, or private, whether in act, thought, word or deſire, but enjoin every virtue, in proportion as the powers of action, which are inceſſantly augmented in the virtuous man, encreaſe: "performing truth in charity, let us encreaſe in all things, in him who is the head, Chriſt," Eph. IV. 15. "Encreaſe in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," 2. Pet. III. 18.

The ſanction of all human laws is defective; they can neither proportion puniſhments to the malignity of delinquents, nor rewards to the virtue of claimants; the motives and intentions of both eſcape the eye of human juſtice; hence actions, in themſelves vicious and reprehenſible, are ſometimes thought laudable, and as ſuch deemed worthy a reward, whilſt acts of heroic virtue are paſſed unnoticed, and not unfrequently treated with contempt.

The ſanction of the divine law is perfect, and ſpeaks the wiſdom of its author; vengeance is denounced againſt vice, by him, from whom no vicious thought is concealed; "all things are naked and open to his eyes," Heb. IV. 13. He will proportion the puniſhment to the number and the malignity of the delinquent's offences: "he will render to every man according to his works," Rom. II. 5. As an inducement to virtue, rewards are propoſed more than adequate. If juſtice meaſures the puniſhment and the offence, liberality diſtributes rewards; "the eye hath not ſeen, nor the ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man, what God has prepared for thoſe who love him," 1. Cor. II. 9.

To engage the juſt to ſanctify their bodies, as well as their ſouls, they are informed that, if they preſerve

preſerve them pure and unpolluted, they will, after paying the debt of nature, riſe again in glory.

"We know that when he (Jeſus Chriſt) will appear, we ſhall be like him, becauſe we ſhall ſee him as he is," 1. John III. 2.

To deter them from the ſin of uncleanneſs; from all exceſſes, and irregularities, they are told that their bodies are the temples of God, and that God will deſtroy the man, who preſumes to profane his temple, 1. Cor. III. 17.

If many who profeſs Chriſtianity, or rather pretend to profeſs it, be ſubject to vice and irregularities, it is becauſe they diſregard its precepts; of ſuch materials Atheiſts, Deiſts, and Philoſophiſts are moulded; brothels are their ſchools, there they have been taught, and there their lectures are received with applauſe. The Atheiſt does not become a profligate; but the profligate becomes an Atheiſt.

Effects are always proportioned, though not always equal to the efficacy of their cauſes. It is ſimply impoſſible that any effect ſhould ſurpaſs the power of action in its cauſe. This principle admitted, the divinity of the evangelical law is manifeſt in its effects: the means employed for the eſtabliſhment of the law are ſo diſproportioned to the effects produced, that the ſucceſs muſt be aſcribed to the divintity of the law, or, if you will, to the almighty power of its author.

Men are expreſsly choſen for the purpoſe as diſqualified as men could be for ſuch an arduous undertaking: wealth or power they had none; to all human ſcience they were ſtrangers; of the loweſt order of a once powerful, but then degraded nation, they are ſent: upon what errand? To ſuppreſs idolatry, in which the whole world was immerſed, and in the rites and ceremonies of which they

they found the gratification of all their paſſions, and moſt violent inclinations; to aboliſh ſuperſtition interwoven with the laws of all nations, in many, the very baſis of empire; to confound the vanity of all the ſects of Heathen Philoſophers; to repreſs abominations, authoriſed by immemorial cuſtom, countenanced by law, and practiſed, not only with impunity, but with applauſe; to ſubſtitute a law, ſublime in its ſpeculative doctrines, incomprehenſible to human underſtanding, beyond the utmoſt ſtretch of imagination; in its moral precepts ſevere, extending its reſtraints to every faculty of the mind, to every deſire of the ſoul, declaring that to be corrupt and vicious, which was univerſally thought lawful and laudable, and promiſing its diſciples nothing in this world but perſecutions and calamities. To enſure ſucceſs, impediments innumerable, to human power inſurmountable, were to be removed; the laws of nations changed; the attachment of idolaters to their rites and cuſtoms, ſanctioned by the example of their anceſtors, and flattering all their paſſions, to be effaced; difficulties to any power inferior to that, which knows no bounds, irreſiſtible, were to be encountered: the perverſe obſtinacy of the jews; the intrigues of the officers of the heathen temples, who, ſeeing their impending ruin, had recourſe to every artifice, which the ſpirit of darkneſs ſuggeſts; the inſidious arts of politicians, ſupported by the ferocious cruelty of deſpotic power; the ſophiſtical declamations of Heathen philoſphers, in a word, the united powers of all the Spirits of Darkneſs, and their emiſſaries. What would a Plato, who with all his wiſdom and eloquence, could never prevail on a village to adopt his opinions, have thought of ſuch an undertaking? What would a Cicero have done if choſen for ſuch a miſſion? Would he

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have dared to undertake it? No, though conſcious of the vanity of idols, he would not acknowledge it; though convinced of the unity of God, he dared not aſſert it; yet it would have been more meritorious to ſpeak well of truth, than to ſpeak ill of Anthony; death would have been more honorable in defence of truth, than in ſupport of perſonal enmity.

If all the Heathen Philoſophers and Orators had united their efforts to reform the Heathen world, would they have been ſucceſsful? No, becauſe they would have to contend with the moſt powerful intereſts and paſſions of man, and in them there was nothing more than man. They never reformed a village, not even themſelves. This great work was reſerved for the inſtructions of a Fiſherman, and a few aſſociates, deſtitute of human ſcience, and every human aſſiſtance. Theſe we ſee ſurmounting all difficulties, removing all impediments, changing the face of the world, ſoftening the manners of Barbarians, aboliſhing abominable rites and cuſtoms: "theſe who inſcribe their name for this diſcipline, do not contract matrimony with their mothers; nor do the Scythians, to whoſe country the word of Chriſt has reached, eat human fleſh; nor do other barbarous nations inceſtuouſly defile their daughters; nor do men diſregarding the rights of nature abuſe each other; nor do they expoſe to dogs, and birds, as was their cuſtom, the bodies of their relatives and friends; nor do they ſtrangle the old and infirm; nor do they feed on the fleſh of their deareſt friends, as their anceſtors did; nor do they ſacrifice men to their idols, as their inſtitutions preſcribe; nor do they, deceived by a falſe opinion of piety, ſtab their beſt beloved friends—with theſe and many ſuch cuſtoms was life infeſted."—*Euſeb.*

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" In Parthia, chriſtians though Parthians have not many wives; in Media they do not give the bodies of the dead to the dogs, nor in Perſia, though Perſians, do they eſpouſe their own daughters; nor in Gaul do men contract with men diſregarding the rites of nature; nor in Egypt do they adore a calf, a dog, a buck-goat or a cat; wherever they live they are not overcome by the torment of cuſtom, the wickedneſs of laws, or the turpitude of immoral inſtitutions; nor can they be forced by power, or induced by ſolicitation, to commit any of theſe monſtrous crimes, forbidden by the laws of their maſter," *Bardesane.*

As the powers of human perſuaſion were totally incapable of producing theſe changes, the ſucceſs of the Apoſtles muſt of all neceſſity be aſcribed to the divinity of the law, which they announced. *Lex Domini immaculata convertens animas.* The irreſiſtible power of the Deity, was alone adequate to ſuch an arduous taſk: any power, inferior to omnipotence, would have been inefficient. The man who does not ſee it, is miſerably blind.

For the rapid progreſs of Mahometan impiety, and the extraordinary ſucceſs of other ſectaries, we find a ſufficient cauſe in that violent inclination to ſenſual pleaſures, which is flattered by theſe teachers, their deluded followers vainly imagine that the removal of all reſtraints propoſed by theſe impoſtors is no impediment to future happineſs. To the ſeverity of the Goſpel they have ſubſtituted a ſyſtem of voluptuouſneſs, little, if at all, inferior to that of the famed Epicurus. Mahomet ſurpaſſes him: for this arch impoſtor flatters his followers with a continuation of that voluptuouſneſs, in which Epicurus had placed ſupreme happineſs in this life; he promiſed nothing after death, but annihilation. Quere, to which of theſe claſſes do our modern Sceptics belong? A

A man of ſolid ſenſe, and true ſcience, ſees in the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, a miracle of all others the moſt convincing; a ſubſiſting miracle, againſt which all ſuppoſitions are vain; a miracle, which could neither commence, nor be continued, but by almighty power; a miracle, which renders impiety odious, and inexcuſable, and baffles the vain efforts of its abettors.

The ſophiſtical declamation of ſome impoſtors againſt the miracles related in the Goſpel comes next under conſideration, one of the moſt virulent of theſe, who from an intenſe hatred of truth, and refined malignity of heart and ſoul was beſt qualified to be an emiſſary of the ſpirit of darkneſs, the irreconcileable enemy of man, pretends that the miracles related in the Goſpel, though underſtood in the literal ſenſe, do not ſufficiently evince the divinity of Jeſus Chriſt; to this he adds that the miracles related, if underſtood in the literal ſenſe, involve a contradiction, of courſe, as he pretends, they are to be underſtood as allegorical, ſymbolical, or prophetical; finally that when Chriſt referred to miracles, he did not ſpeak of things, which he had done in the fleſh, but of things which he was to do in the ſpirit. Our modern Sceptics have borrowed their ideas from this Sophiſt, as he did from Julian, the apoſtate, and Celſus, the Heathen philoſopher, to whom he was as far ſuperior in malice, as he was inferior in ſcience.

To what has been ſaid on the ſubject of miracles already, the writer only adds, that every event out of the ordinary courſe of things may be conſidered in ſome ſenſe miraculous: it is truly ſo, or apparently ſo; relatively miraculous, or abſolutely ſo: the production of any ſubſtance immediately, which did not exiſt before, either in itſelf, or in its ſubject,

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is abſolutely miraculous, ſuch a production is the immediate effect of omnipotence. The inſtantaneous converſion of one ſubſtance into another, the ſenſible qualities of which are both different and diſſimilar, may or may not ſurpaſs the power of created agents; it manifeſtly ſurpaſſes the power of any viſible agent known to us: whether it be abſolutely or relatively miraculous is uſeleſs to enquire, and impoſſible to determine: for if all matter be homogenous in its elementary parts, and ſpecific difference be the reſult of the relative poſition of theſe parts, ſuch a change does not ſeem to ſurpaſs the power of created agents; if on the contrary the elementary parts of matter be ſpecifically different, and independent on relative poſition, the converſion of one ſubſtance into another is beyond the limits of created power: becauſe it is not within the courſe of the eſtabliſhed order, which no created Being is allowed to tranſgreſs.

To communicate life to a body, in which it has been totally extinguiſhed, is an abſolute miracle. The truth of this obſervation is manifeſt from this ſimple conſideration, that in the fœtus there is a diſpoſition, an immediate tendency to life, it is of courſe enlivened in due time, according to the order eſtabliſhed by the Creator; but the extinction of life introduces a contrary diſpoſition, a tendency to corruption. To reſtore life by any created agent would require the eſtabliſhment of a new order directly contrary to that, which the Creator himſelf has eſtabliſhed, which is manifeſtly impoſſible.

The healing of a diſeaſe, though incurable by any means or remedies known to man, does not ſeem to ſurpaſs the power of created agents: whilſt life ſubſiſts, the ſprings on which it depends, however weakened, may be reinſtated by ſome powerful,

agent, removing obſtacles, and applying remedies to us unknown.

The inſtantaneous reſtoration of perfect health, without the application of any remedy, in the caſe of a long and lingering diſeaſe, though curable in due courſe of time, and by ordinary means, may be claſſed with the former, and is relatively miraculous.

It is an invariable rule that the powers of created agents are great in proportion to the excellence of their nature, but never of ſuch extent as to ſubvert the order eſtabliſhed by the Creator; the ſuppoſition is ridiculous: becauſe their powers of action, however great, cannot equal his, who gave them; they muſt therefore be ſubject to the controul of the laws eſtabliſhed by him. As the ſpiritual or intellectual world is eſſentially different from the material world which we inhabit, the laws to which they are ſubject muſt be different, many laws, on which the ſymmetry, harmony, and beauty, of this viſible world depends we know by experience; thus we know the laws of motion, others we conjecture from analogy, the moſt eſſential eſcape our obſervation.

Spirit and matter formed into one principle of action by a ſubſtantial union, is the link in the chain of Beings, which unites the intellectual and material world; man is therefore in part ſubject to the laws of both, not ſtrictly, and excluſively to the laws of either: thus, though the human body be affected by the laws of motion, it is not ſo ſtrictly ſo, as the inanimate ſtone; for being not merely the paſſive inſtrument of the ſoul, but an eſſential part of the man, the principle of action, it partakes in ſome meaſure of his locomotive powers, of this the inanimate ſtone is incapable; in like manner the human ſoul not being a complete ſpirit, and independent agent,

agent, but the ſubſtantial form, which animates matter, and informs the human body, it muſt depend on the body in many of its operations: it is therefore in ſome meaſure ſubject to the laws of motion, which govern this viſible world.

What are the laws, which govern the intellectual world we do not know; what are the powers of action in ſpirits, in themſelves complete and independent agents. we are left to conjecture. From analogy we conclude that they poſſeſs locomotive power, becauſe we poſſeſs this power from the inherent activity of our ſoul, a quality of which matter is deſtitute, and which to matter is incommunicable; this power is great in proportion to the ſuperior excellence of their nature, but circumſcribed by the eſtabliſhed order, which they are not allowed to deſtroy.

How a ſpirit acts on matter we do not know; or how impreſſions are made on ſpirits by material objects we are yet to diſcover; that both is common we know, but the manner is, and in all appearance ever will be, an inpenetrable ſecret.

From experience we know the mutual actions of all bodies: it is in a certain ratio, in certain diſtances invariably the ſame. This is the reſult of laws, depending ſolely on the will of the Creator, ſo conſtant in their operation, that they are ſubject to mathematical preciſion; if we may judge by analogy, the actions of ſpirits on material objects, and the impreſſions made on ſpirits by ſuch objects, or on one ſpirit by another, muſt be the reſult of laws eſtabliſhed for the government of the intellectual world.

One created ſpirit having from its nature no authority over another in the intellectual world, the impreſſions, which it makes, or any authority which it

it exerciſes, muſt depend ſolely on the will of the Creator, and on the rules eſtabliſhed by him for the government of pure intelligences; the intervention of ſenſible objects is therefore totally unneceſſary. Matter ſo far from aſſiſting an intelligence in its operations, would only impede. Whether ſuch intervention be neceſſary to enable a diſengaged ſpirit to make impreſſions on the human mind, whilſt informing the body, or not, is uncertain, the writer thinks ſuch intervention total uſeleſs: for ſince many operations of the mind are independent on the ſenſes, no reaſon can be aſſigned, why a diſengaged ſpirit, acting according to the laws eſtabliſhed for the intellectual world, ſhould not make impreſſions on the mind, whilſt informing the body, as when diſengaged, the mind whether informing the body, or diſengaged, being the ſame in all its eſſential properties. Hence, when it is ſaid in the ſcriptures, that angels have appeared to men, ſpoken to them, &c. the aſſumption of bodies compoſed of air, or any other material ſubſtance, ſeems totally unneceſſary, as they might, without deviating from eſtabliſhed rules, make the ſame impreſſions on the minds of the perſons, to whom they appeared, without the intervention of any ſenſible object.

That the powers of action inherent in diſengaged ſpirits, whether of light or darkneſs, are far ſuperior to ours is clear from the foregoing obſervations; that therefore they may produce effects in appearance miraculous muſt be admitted; but theſe effects, however great, muſt be under the controul of the general order eſtabliſhed by the Creator, which they cannot ſubvert. Thus, for example, to raiſe a tempeſt confined to a certain ſpace, by cauſing an unuſual commotion in a certain portion of air, may, and in all appearance is, within the power of an Angel

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of Light or Darkneſs; but to ſtop the motion of the moon, the ebbing or flowing of the ſea, is not within the reach of either: it is beyond the limits of created power, becauſe it is a general order, which no created power can deſtroy.

Whatever powers Angels of Light, or Spirits of Darkneſs, may poſſeſs, they cannot exerciſe them to the deſtruction of God's Works without his permiſſion; let their powers of deſtruction be ever ſo great, they cannot deſtroy a fly without his permiſſion: for, being all ſecondary cauſes, they muſt depend on God, the primary cauſe, in all their actions. Hence it follows, that they can produce no extraordinary effects, ſurpaſſing the power of viſible agents, in ſupport of error not diſcoverable by reaſon, becauſe ſuch effects would unavoidably ſeduce men from truth, which perfects the mind, and lead to criminal errors which corrupt it—It would be the deſtruction of God's greateſt work in this viſible world.

That in the times of heathen ſuperſtition, the Spirits of Darkneſs, did effect ſome things ſurpaſſing the power of viſible agents, is extremely probable: but the error, which theſe extrordinary events were intended to authoriſe, that is, idolatry, was in itſelf ſo abſurd, ſo oppoſite to the light of reaſon, that none could be deceived who conſulted reaſon. The permiſſion of ſuch events was one of theſe dreadful judgments which God, in his juſtice, exerciſes on thoſe who make their reaſon ſubſervient to their paſſions. Where the error is not ſenſible, or not ſo manifeſt that reaſon may without difficulty detect it, ſuch events are not permitted: they are inconſiſtent with the general order of Providence, which will not permit God's creatures to be unavoidably ſeduced, and his works corrupted.

Of falſe teachers, ſince the eſtabliſhment of chriſti-

anity,

anity, few have appealed to ſupernatural effects to warrant their miſſion; they who did were miſerably diſappointed: ſome arch impoſtors, who, to countenance their errors, did pretend to ſupernatural powers, were detected; they had prevailed on ſome deluded wretches to feign themſelves dead, when they pretended to raiſe them they were found in reality lifeleſs. The relatives of theſe wretches publiſhed the cheat.

It has been already obſerved that miracles, as all other facts, are known, not by metaphyſical diſquiſition, but by the teſtimony of their ſenſes to the immediate witneſſes, to us, at a diſtance from the times, and ſcenes of action, by the teſtimony of the witneſſes authentically tranſmitted. Thus we know that Cæſar was murdered, with as unerring certainty as the men who aſſiſted at that tragical ſcene; the conviction of the truth is as ſtrong on our minds, but the impreſſion of horror is diminiſhed.

Facts, which are not uncommon, are believed without diſcuſſion; if they be not intereſting, the diſcuſſion is minute in proportion as facts are intereſting, yet whilſt they remain in the ordinary courſe of events, there muſt be ſtrong prejudices againſt a witneſs to ruin his credit. Extraordinary facts are not admiſſible, nor are they ever univerſally believed, without ſtrict enquiry; the leaſt prejudice againſt a witneſs, will invalidate his teſtimony, hence we may conclude that facts extremely intereſting, which ſurpaſs the power of viſible agents, cannot poſſibly obtain credit if the witneſſes, who atteſt them, be not found upon ſtrict inveſtigation, free from ſuſpicion, of ſurpriſe, fraud or deſign.

Man is by nature ſo conſtituted that he eaſily believes

lieves what flatters his paſſions, if it be not out of the ordinary courſe of things, if ſo, however flattering the event may appear, a wiſe man muſt ſuſpend his opinion, until after diſcuſſion ; but man is inacceſſible to a truth, which mortifies him, if not forced by inconteſtible evidence to admit it. As miracles in general have been offered in proof of truths mortifying to human nature, contradicting man's moſt violent inclinations, captivating his underſtanding, and curbing his imagination, it would have been more than a miracle if they had obtained credit without diſcuſſion, or if, upon the moſt exact and critical diſcuſſion they had not been ſupported by irreſiſtible evidence : hence St. Auſtin ſays : the man, who does not believe theſe prodigies to have been effected, which the world believes, is himſelf a prodigy.

To found an aſſent in prudence it is neceſſary to be well aſſured that the witneſſes of miraculous events were not deceived, nor diſpoſed to deceive; if to theſe conditions a third be added, that is, that any attempt to deceive would have been fruitleſs, the teſtimony is unexceptionable : it impreſſes conviction on the mind ; to refuſe an aſſent is the effect of perverſe obſtinacy.

Theſe principles pre-ſuppoſed, let us proceed to examine the miracles of Jeſus Chriſt. As man he was the moſt humble, meek, humane and innocent, of Adam's race ; his life ſo free from blemiſh, or even ſuſpicion, that he ſubmitted it to the criticiſm of his enemies ; "which of you," ſaid he, John iv. 46, "will charge me with ſin ?" that the traitor who ſold him, acknowledged his innocence "I have ſinned, betraying innocent blood," Matt. xxvii. 4 ; the charges brought before Pilate by his moſt malignant enemies were ſo manifeſtly calumnious, that, from them, without hearing a word in his defence, Pilate was convinced

convinced of his innocence: "I find in him no cauſe," John xviii, 38; and when forced by the clamors of the Jews to conſent to his death, he waſhed his hands ſaying: "I am innocent of the blood of this juſt man," Matt xxvii, 24. The ſanctity of his doctrine was perfectly correſpondent with the ſanctity of his life, a ſketch of his morality has been given, and, contraſted with that of the heathen philoſophers; he ſhewed the folly and impiety of idolatry; the neceſſity of honoring one God, Creator of all things; the boundleſs ſubmiſſion due to his orders in the moſt trying circumſtances. Impoſtors do not ſacrifice their lives to enforce obedience to the law of God, their lives were never remarkable for ſanctity; the blaſpheming Scioliſt, who pretends that Jeſus Chriſt was an impoſtor, ought to aſſign ſome private intereſt, which he had in view. Impoſtors, who have no other object in view but the glory of God, and the welfare of man; who ſacrifice themſelves to the happineſs of others, are of ſuch an uncommon character, that they are to be ſought for in the wild imagination of modern ſcribblers—there are no ſuch phenomena in nature.

To paſs unnoticed the miracles attending his birth, by which his miſſion was announced, let us examine minutely ſome of the many, which he wrought to atteſt the truth of his doctrine, the firſt we find upon record is the converſion of water into wine at Cana in Galilee, John II. The witneſſes were numerous, the diſciples were preſent: "he manifeſted his glory, and his diſciples believed in him," v. 2. The diſciples were not philoſophers, no, nor were the waiters who drew the waters, and filled the ſix ſtone pots, each containing two or three *metretas*, or meaſures; but the moſt illiterate peaſant knows the difference between wine and water, as well as the moſt

moſt acute philoſopher. The water might have been removed and wine ſubſtituted by ſome artifice. Yes, if there had been but an ounce or two, or even a few pounds, by ſome ſtratagem might have been removed; but the impoſſibility of deception in ſo great a quantity is manifeſt: the Greek *metreta* and the Hebrew *batus* was a meaſure of a cubic foot; a cubic foot of water weighs ſixty two pounds and half avoirdupoiſe, or $76\frac{5}{12}$ Troy weight, the philoſopher may conſult any writer on hydroſtatics, the unlearned may believe it on the credit of the author. Hence confining each pot, to two *metretas*, or meaſures, the quantity of water converted into wine was nine hundred and ſeventeen pounds, Troy. The inſtantaneous removal of ſuch a quantity unknown to, or unobſerved by ſpectators, is not within the reach of ſtratagem or artifice.

A chemical preparation might give the appearance of wine to a ſmall quantity of water, and impoſe on the ſimplicity of perſons unaccuſtomed to wine; but a chemical preparation to convert two hogſheads of water inſtantaneouſly into wine, unobſerved by the ſpectators, muſt be extracted from the feculence of a modern ſceptic's brain. As the wine was not conſumed, nor intended to be conſumed, immediately, in a company where there was a preſident of the ſacerdotal order to prevent the effects of intemperance, as was the cuſtom of the Jews upon ſuch occaſions, the deception, if any had been, muſt have been detected.

To remove every ſuſpicion of fraud, the waiters were ordered to draw the water, to fill the ſtone pots, which being intended for the Jewiſh purifications, were always to be filled with pure elementary water; from this water untouched by Jeſus Chriſt to preſent to the preſident of the company, who, from his

office, must have been perfectly sober, he declared it wine of a superior quality.

The fact was publicly asserted by some of the witnesses whilst they were all, or at least a great majority of them living, and not contradicted by avowed enemies, no fact was ever authentic if this be not. Let us pass to another equally authentic, and not less surpassing the power of man, Matt. xiv. We read that with five loaves and two fishes 5000 men besides women and children were fed, and that twelve baskets were filled with the fragments, which remained. Here there was no room for deception, or collusion: 5000 men were not taught to believe that they had dined, and dismissed with hungry bellies, words do not satisfy hunger: something more substantial than sound is necessary to appease its cravings. Why were such numbers collected? because they had already seen the most unheard of prodigies. "And Jesus, answering, said to them, (John's disciples) go and relate to John what you have heard and seen, the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again." Matt. xi. 4—5. St. Luke adds: "at that hour he relieved many from diseases, and infirmities, and gave sight to many, who were blind:" vii. 21. He had already raised to life the widow of Naim's son, of which miracle the whole country was informed: Luke vii. 15. These miracles were public; John's disciples had seen them, or he would not have ordered them to relate what they saw, it would have been a most ridiculous injunction. It is not matter of surprise that some thousands were collected; but it is a melancholy reflection that the inveterate and incurable envy of the Pharisees prevented greater numbers from attending to the instructions of such a teacher; they, who did, were not disappointed: "and he, coming forth,

saw

ſaw a great multitude, and had compaſſion on them, and healed their ſick," Matt. xiv. 14; "And there came to him great multitudes, having with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, and many others, and they caſt them at his feet, and he healed them," Matt. XV, 30; "ſo that the multitudes wondered ſeeing the dumb ſpeak, the lame walk, and the blind ſee, and they glorified the God of Iſrael," *ibid.* Of theſe multitudes many attended for inſtruction; ſome in gratitude for paſt relief from infirmities; others in hopes of preſent; of the Phariſees, and their adherents, ſome attracted by ſimple, perhaps faultleſs, curioſity, others to ſcrutinize, and detect, if poſſible, ſome word or action, on which to found an accuſation, and diminiſh the credit of a man, who unmaſked their hypocriſy, of this laſt claſs it does not appear that many were in the deſert.

But why withdraw into this deſert place? Herod had juſt put John to death, and, hearing the report of Chriſt's miracles, was deſirous of ſeeing him, Luke IX. 9. Chriſt did not think proper at that time to expoſe himſelf to the fury of that tyrant, moreover the place was not far diſtant from a populous country, in which there was no ſcarcity of proviſions. Hence St. Luke ſays, IX. 12, "the day began to decline, and the Twelve came, and ſaid to him: diſmiſs the crouds that, going into the towns and villages about, they may lodge and find proviſions."

But why remain three whole days without proviſions? It is not ſaid that they were without proviſions, but that they were three days attending to Chriſt's inſtructions: the quantity, which they brought, appears to have been conſumed before the evening of the third day, and as they delayed until perhaps it might have been inconvenient to ſome, and impoſſible to others, to find proviſions, that night in the adjacent

djacent towns and villages, had they been diſmiſſed without food, ſome of them would have fainted on the way. But why remain until evening? Chriſt's will, to which all his creatures are obedient, was a ſufficient reaſon, the attractive powers of his divine preſence, and his heavenly voice, eaſily detained them.

In this miracle, the authenticity of which is unexceptionable, the almighty power of God is manifeſt. It does not appear that the loaves were increaſed by any additional matter, whether immediately created, or pre-exiſting in ſome other form, and ſuper-added: St. John ſays, expreſsly, that the twelve baſkets of fragments, which remained were of the barley loaves, (vi) of theſe, not of any additional matter, the men muſt have eaten, and, as they were ranged in companies of fifties and hundreds, (Mark vi) theſe five loaves muſt have been preſent, and eaten at the ſame time by theſe different companies, leſs than five loaves, was not ſufficient for a company of fifty, they muſt alſo have been preſent in the baſkets, after the company had dined. This obſervation may ſerve as a corrective to the wild declamation of ſome new fangled teachers, who, though believing the power of God to be infinite, pretend to confine it by their own imagination, as if infinite power cannot produce an effect beyond the range of limited imagination.

Of theſe raiſed from the dead, three are particularly mentioned by the Evangeliſts, perhaps they were of greater note, or the facts, from their nature, were leſs liable to objection. The widow of Naim's ſon, Luke VII. 15; the daughter of Jair, prince of the ſynagogue, Matt. IX, Mark VI, Luke VIII; and Lazarus, John XI. Modern Sceptics, in imitation of their anceſtors, the Heathen philoſophers, under the influence of the ſame ſpirit of darkneſs, "who is

King

King over all the ſons of pride," Job XLI. 25; "at whoſe will they are held captives," 2d Tim. II. 26; "by whoſe envy death entered into the world, and whom all theſe imitate, who are of his party," Wiſdom II. 25, have exhauſted invention to throw ſome obſcurity on theſe miracles; their efforts have only ſerved to elucidate them.

The firſt is thus related by St. Luke: "as he approached the gate of the city a dead man was carried out, an only ſon to his mother, and ſhe a widow, a great multitude from the city with her; whom when the Lord ſaw he was moved with compaſſion for her; and ſaid to her do not weep; and coming up he touched the coffin, (theſe who carried it ſtood) and ſaid young man, I ſay to thee, ariſe; and he who had been dead ſat up, and began to ſpeak, and he gave him to his mother: fear ſeized them all, and they magnified God," Luke VII.

There might have been a colluſion, ſays the Sceptic, between Chriſt and the Widow, it is ſaid that a drowning man will catch at a ruſh, deſpair ſuggeſts ſubterfuges, which carry improbability and ſometimes impoſſibility, on their face, ſuch is the preſent: it does not appear that Chriſt's poſſeſſions in Judea were great, or that he made any valuable acquiſitions for the aggrandizement of himſelf or family. The pretended colluſion would require no trifling ſum: to purchaſe the perpetual ſilence of a woman of ſome note, of her ſon, of all perſons concerned in a public funeral, was not eaſy, to paſs unnoticed the impoſſibility of impoſing on his diſciples, of whom we ſhall ſpeak hereafter.

To this firſt ſubterfuge the Sceptic adds a ſecond: perhaps, ſays he, the young man was in a lethargic fit. Why not inform us by what extraordinary combination

combination of events Chriſt arrived at the very inſtant of his recovery? What amazing ſagacity he muſt have had to diſcover that this young man, whom he had not ſeen, and who was thought dead by thoſe, who ſaw him, was but in a lethargic fit, and that he would awake preciſely at that inſtant of time, and in that place? What penetration of mind does our Sceptic diſplay in his different ſuppoſitions?

His laſt ſubterfuge yet remains to be examined: St. Luke is the only Evangeliſt who relates this fact, and he was not preſent at it. True, but he is not the only one who believed it. The fact was never denied by the Jews, nor contradicted; if we may judge by his writings, St. Luke was not a man open to ſeduction; he muſt have had the fact from unqueſtionable authority, or he would not have related it: Men of ſenſe are not impoſtors without private views.

The Evangeliſts did not write a hiſtory of Chriſt's miracles: their object was to ſhew that he was the Meſſias, promiſed and expected by the Jews, and to engage both them, and the Gentiles, to believe in him, and obſerve the maxims of his divine law, to evince the truth of his miſſion, and the indiſpenſable neceſſity of obedience to his precepts: they ſpoke in general of his miracles, ſpecifying ſome, which to them, and to us alſo, appeared unexceptionable, in this we admire their wiſdom: Why ſo? becauſe any one miraculous effect, beyond the reach of created power, is ſufficient to authenticate his miſſion, and all the other miracles, which he wrought; as it was impoſſible that God, by an immediate interference, ſhould authorize deception, or permit any deception in his name, without affording ſufficient means to detect it.

But why did not all the Evangeliſts relate the ſame miracles?

miracles? They did: for they ſay in general that he healed the ſick, the lame and blind; that he raiſed the dead, and caſt out evil ſpirits. They did not always ſpecify the ſame miracles becauſe they did not conſult each the other, nor act in concert having no impoſture in view, hence each of the Evangeliſts inſiſted more particularly on what he thought ſufficient for his purpoſe. Three of the Evangeliſts relate the reſurrection of Jair's daughter: their ſimple narration leaves no room for ſuſpicion: Chriſt on his return from the country of the Geraſani, who were diſpleaſed for the loſs of their hogs, was met by the Prince of the Synagogue, a man of great note in the country, he tells Chriſt that his daughter was dying, and, proſtrate at his feet, he prayed him to come and heal her, on the way a meſſenger arrived, who informed them that the girl was dead. Chriſt tells the diſconſolate father not to fear, and continues his journey; at their arrival they found a tumult, tears and lamentations, ſome muſical inſtruments playing, as was cuſtomary with the Jews; Chriſt orders them all out, ſaying, the child is not dead but ſleeps, thereby ſignifying that it was as eaſy for him to raiſe her from death, as to awake her from ſleep: he then takes with him the girl's parents, and three of his diſciples, as witneſſes, whilſt the croud derided him for attempting to awake a girl from death, which they thought impoſſible; he then takes the girl by the hand, and ordered her to riſe, which ſhe did immediately; the ſarcaſtical deriſion of the multitude only ſerved to ſilence obloquy, and remove the moſt diſtant ſuſpicion, or even colour of deception. This ſimple narration ſets the powers of invention at defiance: there could have been no colluſion with the prince, and his whole family. An impoſtor, on the news of her death, would have interrupted his jour-

ney;

ney ; he would not dare to promiſe relief, which he muſt know was not within his power ; he could not preſume that the girl was in a trance, and would recover at the very inſtant that he ordered, not before, all theſe circumſtances leave no room for cavilling.

To ſet the vanity of our modern Sceptics in a clear light, the conjectures, on which they pretend to invalidate the truth of miracles, which have ſtood the teſt of ages, and obtained the ſuffrage of all poliſhed nations, are here inſerted :

They are, ſay they, related in ſuch order as gives room for ſuſpicion. The reſurrection of Lazarus, the greateſt of Chriſt's miracles, is omitted by Matthew, Mark, and Luke ; related by John, who wrote his goſpel at an advanced age, when the witneſſes were dead, he might then have invented this fact in honor of his maſter. It is not probable that the other three would have omitted it if the fact had not been ſuppoſed. The widow of Naim might have agreed with Chriſt, and her ſon might have feigned himſelf dead, or he might have been in a lethargy, and rouſed at that critical inſtant ; Jair's daughter might have been ſubject to vapours ; Chriſt himſelf ſaid that ſhe ſlept ; as he directed them to conceal the miracle, he did not think it unexceptionable ; the circumſtances of Lazarus's reſurrection render the miracle doubtful : Chriſt is ſaid to have wept, to have called with a loud voice ; and Lazarus to have riſen, his face covered with a towel, theſe circumſtances found a ſuſpicion of impoſture, and the preſumption is encreaſed by the fury of the Jews, who reſolved to put both Chriſt and Lazarus to death.

If to eſtabliſh facts, or to efface pre conceived opinions, the Evangeliſts had offered ſuſpicions and ſurmiſes,

ſurmiſes, they would have been objects of univerſal deriſion: wild conjectures either for, or againſt hiſtory, are treated with contempt. The ſuſpicions againſt the reſurrection of the widow's ſon, and Jair's daughter, have been already diſcuſſed; the injunction of ſilence is an indirect cenſure on vanity; if the three Evangeliſts do not make ſpecial mention of the reſurrection of Lazarus, it is not the only fact, which they paſs unnoticed, it was not neceſſary to their purpoſe. They had aſſigned other miracles authentic, ſufficient and equally effectual to eſtabliſh the truth of Chriſt's miſſion: the reſurrection of a dead body, whether four months or four minutes lifeleſs, is beyond the range of limited power; the feeding of four or five thouſand people with a few loaves of bread is not leſs ſo. If the three Evangeliſts had denied the fact, their denial would have been ſufficient to invalidate St. John's relation; their ſilence is totally immaterial: the ſilence of ten witneſſes on a fact, of which they do not ſpeak at all, does not affect the teſtimony of one, who aſſerts it.

It is true John was old when he wrote his Goſpel, his authority muſt have been indiſputable to obtain credit; it is not poſſible that any man relating miraculous events of public notoriety, within the memory of man, of which the world had not heard before, ſhould obtain credit on his bare aſſertion. If Lazarus was not living when John wrote his Goſpel, of the immenſe number of Jews who embraced the chriſtian religion in Jeruſalem, Judea and elſewhere, ſome hundreds were yet living, who knew the fact, either on the teſtimony of their own ſenſes, or from the relation of ocular witneſſes.

The circumſtances, which in our ſophiſt's opinion found a ſuſpicion, are calculated on principles of

common ſenſe to remove every ſuſpicion : the Saviour aſked the Jews where they had laid him, in order to extort from them an acknowledgement of his death, and that he had lain four days in the grave ; he ordered them to remove the ſtone that they might ſee the corpſe, which they had interred ; he called aloud that they might be witneſſes of the power, which he exerciſed over death ; Lazarus came forth bound as he was buried, Chriſt ordered them to looſe him, to convince them it was not a phantom, but the very man, whom they had depoſited in the grave.

As St. John had written his Goſpel expreſsly to demonſtrate the divinity of Jeſus Chriſt againſt the errors of Ebion, Cerinthus and others, it was natural for them to inſiſt more particularly on theſe miracles, in which, the independent and almighty power of Chriſt was moſt viſible. In his relation of the reſurrection of Lazarus the true character of Chriſt is manifeſt, that is, the unity of his perſon in the divine and human nature : he wept, which is a function peculiar to man ; he groaned in ſpirit, indignant at the cruelty of the demon, by whoſe envy ſin, and death the wages of ſin, had entered the world ; the deſtruction of theſe enemies was the great end of his miſſion. He lifted up his eyes to the father, that they might ſee it was in the name of the true God he taught ; by his own almighty power he ordered the dead man to riſe, and was inſtantly obeyed, ſhewing that he himſelf was God, one with the father, as he had ſaid, and exerciſing the ſame power ; in all this there could have been no deception, nor could God permit a deception in his name, which was inacceſſible to detection.

In like manner all the circumſtances of the cure of the blind man, John IX, ſhew him to have been the Creator, he made clay with his ſpittle, put it on the

blind

blind man's eyes, thus forming the moſt delicate organ of the human frame of the ſame matter, of which he had originally formed the whole body. Conſidered as a medical application, clay is better calculated to deſtroy ſight, than to produce it. He ſent the man through the city, to the pool of Siloe, at the foot of Mount Sion, that the citizens might be witneſſes of the power, which he exerciſed, abſent as well as preſent; after he had waſhed in the pool his eyes were opened, or, to ſpeak more correctly, the organs of ſight were then formed. The man's return with his eyes open, entire, and perfect, ſurpriſed all thoſe, who knew him from his birth, and who ſaw him go blind to the pool; the Phariſees alarmed, interrogate him in the moſt artful manner, to obtain ſomething from his anſwers to veil a truth deſtructive of their own authority; their malice only ſerved to remove every exception; in deſpair they have recourſe to the circumſtance of the ſabbath, pretending that making clay with the ſpittle, and putting it on the eyes, was a violation of the ſabbath. However ridiculous the pretence it had the deſired effect on ſome; but the reſurrection of Lazarus was open to no pretence; hence they reſolved to murder him, and Jeſus Chriſt alſo, thinking that, the only effectual means of removing a cenſor of ſuch authority. At his entrance into Jeruſalem, hearing the croud atteſt that he had called Lazarus from the tomb, all efforts, ſay they, are vain: "the whole world follows him," John IX. 19. In the Council which they aſſembled, the only accuſation brought againſt him was, that he wrought miracles, and if they permitted him to continue, that all would believe in him, John XI. 47. But if theſe miracles were not ſuppoſed, why did not the prieſts and Phariſees, who were beſt qualified

to

to examine ſuch facts, believe in them? Some did, many did not; ſome who did, dared not avow it, for which the Evangeliſt aſſigns a very ſimple reaſon, "many of the princes believed in him, but, becauſe of the Phariſees, they did not confeſs, leaſt they ſhould be expelled the ſynagogue, they loved the glory of men, more than the glory of God," John XII. 42—43.

The ſeeming regularity of the Phariſees, that appearance of ſanctity, which they aſſumed, gave them an aſcendant over the minds of the people, who believed them ſuch as they appeared; this aſcendant was to them a ſource of wealth and power; it fed their ambition, and their avarice, theſe two great ſprings of action. Chriſt was in their mind a moſt importunate rival, his doctrine deſtructive of their aſcendancy, cancelling at once their honors and intereſts: he unmaſked their hypocriſy, undeceived the people, ruined their credit; they of courſe conſidered him as their capital enemy, and to prevent their own ruin, reſolved on his. As the ſame cauſes, acting in ſimilar circumſtances, invariably produce the ſame effects, we find an oppoſition made to the Goſpel, in all ages, on the very principles, on which the oppoſition of the Phariſees to Chriſt himſelf was founded. Thus when Paul preaches againſt idolatry in Epheſus, Demetrius the ſilver-ſmith, who employed many workmen in the fabrication of ſmall ſilver temples, like the great temple of Diana, ſaid to them: "you ſee, and hear, that, not only at Epheſus, but all over Aſia, this Paul perſuades, and averts, a great multitude ſaying they are not Gods, which are made by hands, ... the temples of the great Diana will be thought nothing of," Acts XIX. 26. To enflame their zeal for the honor of the goddeſs, he had prefaced

faced his diſcourſe by ſaying, " you know that our gain is by this trade." v. 25.

From authentic hiſtory we know the arts, which were practiſed by the miniſters of the heathen temples to ſupport the credit of their Idols, and preſerve them from that deſtruction, which the chriſtian ſyſtem threatened; the pretended reſponſes of their oracles deſiring the extermination of chriſtians as enemies not only to the Gods, but to their Kings. Was it pure zeal for the glory of their idols? No. Theſe impoſtors could not be ignorant of the vanity of their Idols, and of the falſehood of the reſponſes, which they themſelves, had forged, but they maſked their private views under the cloak of zeal for the honor of their Idols, the ſame is true of all the different leaders of factions amongſt chriſtians: not one of theſe new teachers, who had not the gratification of ſome favourite paſſion in view, the pretended diſcovery of ſome abuſe was a maſk to conceal the real motive of the revolt. The ſimple were deluded with the idea of reform, the more clear ſighted ſaw a field open to ambition, a removal of reſtraints was a ſtrong allurement to the ſenſual; novelty an inducement to many. A party is ſoon formed; to encreaſe the party, recourſe is had to artifice: the paſſions of the great are flattered; miſrepreſentation of the tenets of the primitive ſyſtem induſtriouſly circulated, the indiſcretion of any of its miniſters maliciouſly exaggerated; the crimes, whether real or pretended, of individuals, aſcribed to the whole body, the moſt calumnious invectives publiſhed with effrontery, every art practiſed that imagination can ſuggeſt to efface the light of truth, and excite an averſion to the abjured communion. The miniſters of the new order, in ſelf defence, muſt endeavour to continue the deception. They inceſſantly

inceſſantly repeat the ſame calumnious miſrepreſentations, and, though a thouſand times refuted by authentic documents, they continue to amuſe their deluded followers by the ſame idle tales, The oppoſition of the Phariſees continues to the preſent day in their ſucceſſors, the ſons of pride; our modern Sophiſts are more inexcuſable, for they have had more unequivocal proof of the divinity of Chriſt, than the Phariſees had: all the miracles, which the Phariſees ſaw, are yet viſible in their effect, the deſtruction of idolatry, and the converſion of the world, as was foretold. This effect, of which our Sophiſts are witneſſes, againſt their will, the Phariſees did not ſee, their obſtinacy, therefore, however criminal, was not ſo inexcuſable, nor will its puniſhment be ſo great.

In the incredulity of the Jews our Sophiſts pretend to diſcover another cauſe of ſuſpicion: if, ſay they, the miracles, which are ſaid to be effected at the birth of Chriſt be combined with theſe which he is ſaid to have wrought in his life time, the Jews muſt have believed in him. Could we, ſays a Jew, who have told the world that one would come from God to puniſh the wicked, treat him ignominouſly when he came? To the Jew the writer replies as he does to his brother the Deiſt, that the queſtion argues a fund of ſtupidity: the magiſtrate, who ſacrifices juſtice to his private views; the woman who dupes and diſhonors her huſband; the highway-man who robs, the aſſaſſin, who murders for hire, diſregard truth, juſtice and all the reſtraints of reaſon and religion; ſo did the Jews; the miſcreants, who brought Chriſt before Pilate, wrapped up in ſelf-created importance, thought their appearance ſufficient to convict him of their calumnious charges; their confidence was great in proportion to the injuſtice

of

of their cauſe: "if this man were not a malefactor would we have delivered him up to thee?" John xviii.

The appearance of the Angel to a few ſhepherds, men of little note, made no impreſſion on the public at large; the arrival of the wiſe men was public and threw the whole city into confuſion; they ſaid that they were come to adore him, who was born King of the Jews. It was thought that this young prince was cut off by Herod in the general maſſacre of the children; few if any knew his eſcape into Egypt: Joſeph and Mary were ſtrangers in Bethleham and had retired in ſilence before the maſſacre, on their return from Egypt they lived in a different part of the country in great obſcurity. Chriſt was thought ſon to a mechanic, by none ſuſpected to be that King, whom the wiſe men came to adore.—Thirty years were more than ſufficient to efface the remembrance of theſe events when nothing occurred to refreſh it. The diſappointment of the Jews at ſeeing a Meſſias, whom they expected to reinſtate their monarchy in Solomon's glory, and make them maſters of the world, preaching poverty and humility without a place to repoſe his wearied limbs, embittered their minds and indiſpoſed them againſt himſelf and his miracles, if he were to come again with the ſame appearance of poverty and humility, teaching the ſame doctrine, working the ſame miracles, he would meet the ſame oppoſition.

Paſſages are cited, mutilated, unconnected with antecedents and conſequents, which determine the ſenſe, ſome diſtorted from the intended ſignification, and others totally ſuppoſed, in order to miſlead the uninformed, and induce them to believe that early writers, Origen, Eucher, Ambroſe, Hilary, Irenæus, Jerome and others, did not think the miracles of Chriſt

Chriſt real, or to be underſtood in the literal ſenſe, though from his miracles they unanimouſly demonſtrate his divinity, to enforce this truth citations are uſeleſs. They have written whole books to demonſtrate the truth and reality of Chriſt's miracles; in their different explications, from which paſſages are artfully extracted, they pre-ſuppoſe the hiſtorical truth, from it they deduce different ſignifications: the miracles of Chriſt were inſtructive as was his words; they have their language, if they be underſtood: but this ſilent language, which miracles ſpeak, ſuppoſe, of all neceſſity, the reality of the facts: thus St. Paul ſays that Abraham's two wives, Agar and Sarah, ſignify the old and new teſtament, as Agar was a ſlave, and Sarah a free woman, but if Abraham had not theſe two wives in reality, the one a ſlave and the other a free woman, they could not be figurative of the old and new teſtament. A non-entity is no ſign. In like manner, St. Auſtin ſays, that Jair's daughter raiſed from death, ſignified the Jewiſh people, but if ſhe had not been raiſed there could have been neither ſign nor ſignification.

Some looſe expreſſions of Origen, in a work which abounds with errors, are artfully diſtorted againſt the ſenſe of the author. There are, he ſays, ſome things written, which have not happened, which could not happen. The aſſertion is true: it is written that at the coming of the Meſſias, the wolf, that fierce and ravenous animal, would feed with the lamb; that the panther would ſleep with the kid; that the calf, the bull, and the lion, would paſture together, that the ox and the bear would have their young in the ſame cavern; that the lion would eat ſtraw with the ox. Theſe things have not happened, nor will they happen. In theſe expreſſions, manifeſtly

feſtly figurative is announced the peace of the world at Chriſt's birth, and the converſion of the Heathens from the ſavage cruelty, natural to theſe ferocious animals, to the meekneſs of the lamb.

From an exuberance of imagination, Origen thought he found allegorical ſignifications where they were not; but the hiſtorical truth of miraculous facts recorded in the ſcriptures he never denied; from the hiſtorical truth he deduced his fanciful ſignifications: his works againſt Celſus contain concluſive evidence of the truth of miracles; in them, the teachers of our profeſſed Sceptics have found all their pretended difficulties againſt truth, there alſo they might have found the moſt ſatisfactory ſolution. The writer does not accuſe the modern fry of having recourſe to Origen's Works: to ignorance and diſſipation they are unintelligible.

As the jaundiced eye refers the yellow hue to every object it ſees, ſo impiety aſcribes the confuſion of its own dreams to the truth, which condemns it. Mole hills are mountains; ſhadows are metamorphoſed into ſubſtances, in the delirium of impiety. There is no fact, however authentic, in which it does not find ſome circumſtance to found a ſuſpicion, and the moſt diſtant ſuſpicion is in its idea convincing evidence. The narration of the Evangeliſts is not ſufficiently detailed; if more circumſtantial, our Sceptics would find greater cauſe of ſuſpicion; the perſons raiſed from death, or relieved from diſeaſes, are not exactly deſcribed; the accounts they brought from the other world are not tranſmitted; why were not theſe miracles wrought in favor of men of note in Judea? Why were not their Princes, their Nobles, raiſed from death? Was it not unjuſt, and injurious, to permit the demons to deſtroy the ſwine; an uſurpation of authority to drive the traders out

of the temple; a flagrant injuſtice to overſet the money changer's tables, and ſcatter their money on the floor? Unlawful to take figs from a tree without the owner's permiſſion? Why expect to find them on the tree when it was not the proper ſeaſon? In the transfiguration there was room for impoſture: he retired to a mountain, where the refraction of light, through ſome cloud, might have dazzled his diſciples. He might have artfully engaged the Samaritan Woman to diſcloſe her own ſecrets, and then pretend to have known them by the ſpirit of prophecy. The women, who are ſaid to be cured of different diſeaſes, might have been ſubject to vapours, ſick, in imagination: from which they might have been relieved by the confidence they placed in his aſſurances. To theſe impertinent queſtions, and wild conjectures, which is, in ſubſtance, all that Sceptics find to cenſure, or ſuſpect, the reply is extremely ſimple: the Evangeliſts were not public notaries, nor did they write for Sceptics: they were plain men, who told plain truth in plain language; a circumſtantial hiſtory of Chriſt's miracles, or of the perſons relieved, was foreign to their purpoſe, and entirely uſeleſs: circumſtances of time, place or perſon, are immaterial; a fact, beyond the limits of human power, is at all times, in all places, and with reſpect to all perſons, impoſſible to man. To God neither time, place, perſon, or ſituation, give oppoſition: there is nothing difficult when omnipotence is the agent.

The atteſtation of perſons raiſed from the dead would be ſuſpected, as is their reſurrection; their obſervations, on the other world, might gratify idle curioſity, they could anſwer no other purpoſe. The joys of Heaven, the horrors of Hell, the narrow path, which leads to the former, and the broad way and rapid deſcent, through which all Sceptics roll on to the

the latter, are deſcribed by Chriſt himſelf, who was better informed.

The deſtruction of the ſwine ſeems rather an act of juſtice: ſwine's fleſh was forbidden by the Jewiſh law, the Samaritans furniſhed both the temptation and means to diſobey the precept. From this event we learn ſome important truths: the intenſe malice of the demon, his deſtructive powers; his irreconcileable enmity even to his ſlaves; but we learn alſo that, however great his natural powers of deſtruction may be, he cannot exert them without an immmediate permiſſion.

In the expulſion of the money changers and traders from the temple, there is no room for cenſure. It was the houſe of his father, which they prophaned, he very juſtly expelled them. It is one of theſe inſtances, in which his power, even over the wicked, is conſpicuous: one of their princes, perhaps, would not have done it with impunity; their ready compliance with his injunction, ſubmiſſion to an ignominious chaſtiſement, and ſilence, when publicly charged with injuſtice by an obſcure individual, poſſeſſed of no place, to which political power is annexed, muſt have been the effect of an inviſible power. In the courſe of natural events it is impoſſible. The fig-tree, being on the way, was perhaps for the uſe of the public, if it had an owner, by his abſolute will, he might have diſpoſed of the tree, and its owner. His humanity, united to the divinity, was ſubject to the natural affections of human nature, according to his will. His hunger was then voluntary, a ſtrong indication of his ardent deſire of the fruits of juſtice and ſanctity; his acceſs to the tree at an unſeaſonable time, ſhews that he expects theſe fruits at all times, and his prohibition to bear fruit in future, at which the tree immediately withered, ſhews the

danger

danger of his finding nothing but leaves, that is vain projects, or ineffectual resolutions. He himself said, in the parable of the fig tree, Luke XIII, "It bears no fruit, cut it down."

To shew that he was Creator of the different classes of Beings, which compose the Universe, he gave signal instances of his power over them all: the demons he expelled, the sick he healed, the dead he raised, the sea and wind obeyed his order. The instances of his power, in conferring favors, are numberless; of inflicting punishments there are but three: the chastisement of the Money Changers, which was extremely moderate, from which we learn, that he punishes with regret, and sparingly, whilst his favors flow from the fulness of his heart, and are without measure. The Swine irrational, and the fig tree inanimate, he totally destroyed, intimating that his power extended over the whole of the Creation. As common father his cares extended to all his children, without distinction or discrimination; the poor were more frequently relieved, because they were numerous, and their wants were greater; the rich were not excluded, if they did not exclude themselves, as too many of them, engaged in pursuits of pleasure, or something worse, unfortunately did. If his enemies complained that he was more profuse of his favors to strangers, than to his fellow citizens, he replied, that in the days of Elias there were many widows in Judea, and that he was sent to a Sidonian; and that, in the days of Naaman, the Syrian, there were many lepers in Israel, and not one of them cleansed. There is no title to extraordinary graces; where there is no title there is no claim, consequently no acceptation of persons, which is a sin against distributive justice.

To refer the transfiguration of Christ to the refraction of light, argues the most contemptible ignorance:

ance : refracted light ſhews the object, from which it is emitted, in the direction in which the refracted ray comes to the eye ; thus, from the refraction of its rays, by the atmoſphere, the ſun appears above the horizon, when it is in reality below it, this is called, by Aſtronomers, "*the ſun's apparent riſing ;*" but refracted light will not form articulate ſounds ; it will not ſhew three men ſpeaking aloud and intelligibly, where there is but one : our aſſent to the truth of the fact reſts on the ſincerity of the witneſſes ; which will be diſcuſſed in the courſe of the work.

Three witneſſes were choſen as neceſſary to atteſt the fact, Moſes from the place of ſouls, and Elias, from the place of his reſt, appeared with him ; the former atteſting his power over the dead, and the latter his ſupreme authority over the living ; both ſhewing that he was not one of the Prophets, as was thought by the Jews ; but the Meſſias, whom the law, of which Moſes was the miniſter, and the Prophets, of whom Elias was the chief, had promiſed. They ſpoke of his departure, which he was to make at Jeruſalem, the term *Exodos*, employed by St. Luke, may ſignify, indifferently, his departure from life on the croſs, or his departure from this viſible world by his aſcenſion ; of all important ſubjects, the moſt important.

Their ſudden diſappearance, leaving Chriſt alone on the mountain, indicates that the law and prophets were no more ; that to Chriſt alone the world muſt look for ſalvation and inſtruction ; that in him all types and figures were fulfilled.

They appeared in glory to inform us that Chriſt's elect will be ſimilar to him ; to engage us to perſevere in the rugged path, which he has traced, in order to arrive at the end, a glimpſe of which had thrown the witneſſes into an exſtacy. Other reaſons

ſons are aſſigned, but theſe are ſufficient to evince not only the truth, but the neceſſity of this miracle.

It is with great propriety called a transfiguration; the Greek term *morphè* uniformly ſignifies the exterior appearance, or figure, not the eſſential parts which conſtitute the ſubſtance, both in the old and new teſtament: thus, Daniel iv, 33, "my ſhape returned," *morphē mou*, and V. 6. "then the King's countenance" *morphē* "was changed," Mark xvi, 12, "he was ſhewn in another ſhape, *etere morphē*."

In his transfiguration the change was confined to the exterior form: "his face was reſplendent as the ſun, and his clothes were white as ſnow.

Chriſt's inſtruction to the Samaritan woman was not intended for her excluſively; millions have learned from it "that God is a ſpirit, and muſt be adored in ſpirit and truth; that the time was come when ſacrifices, either in the temple of Jeruſalem, or the mount of Garazim, would be no longer acceptable." Was it from the Samaritan that Chriſt had learned theſe ſecrets? If ſo ſhe was a moſt intelligent woman. Theſe imaginary diſeaſes, which our ſceptics have detected, are ſtrong indications of ſome mental derangement at home: in all imaginary diſtempers there is ſomething real, the patient miſtakes it. Moral remedies may engage him to have recourſe to proper phyſical remedies, and ſo remove the diſeaſe; our ſophiſts are diſeaſed at heart, the head feels it, but miſtakes the nature and ſeat of the diſtemper. Obſtinacy, the eldeſt daughter of pride, renders their diſeaſe incurable. Is the imagination of a dead man eaſily rectified? of a man born blind? his imagination muſt be a moſt powerful agent to form the organs of ſight inſtantaneouſly. Does imagination cure the deaf, the dumb, the maimed? Women afflicted, the one eighteen years, another twelve,

twelve, with no uncommon diſeaſe, an iſſue of blood? There is ſomething ſo ſtupidly impudent in pretending to invalidate a well atteſted fact, by a ſurmiſed poſſibility, that it is irkſome to diſcuſs it.

We are come to the laſt ſubterfuge of impiety, the miracles of Chriſt are not atteſted by the Jews; the controverſial writings of the Jews, in which theſe miracles were refuted, might have been ſuppreſſed by the Chriſtians; it appears, even from the Evangeliſts, that he did not heal all the ſick, who were brought to him; that he healed but one at the Pool of Bethſaida, though there were many ſick there at the time; that he could not work miracles in his own country. All theſe circumſtances, ſay our ſophiſts, found a ſuſpicion that his hiſtory was ſuppoſed by the Evangeliſts, and that there was nothing real in his pretended miracles.

How theſe ſublime writers diſcovered that Chriſt's miracles were not atteſted by the Jews, we plain men are at a loſs to conjecture, the Apoſtles were Jews, the primitive Church in Jeruſalem, conſiſting of many thouſands, of whom a great number were of the ſacerdotal order, was entirely compoſed of Jews: all theſe believed, and atteſted, the miracles of Chriſt. The Scribes and Phariſees, his avowed enemies, did not deny them: they had recourſe to artful evaſions to elude the force of them. Cavilling on the circumſtance of the Sabbath, as if it were unlawful to heal the ſick on that day, if they found no circumſtance to cenſure, aſcribing them to Beelzebub; but the facts they did not deny, nor do their deſcendants, to the preſent day.

When we are told who were theſe Jewiſh writers, who refuted the miracles of Chriſt, how, when, by whom, or where, their works have been ſuppreſſed; why the Jews connived at ſuch ſuppreſſion, we ſhall

diſcuſs

diſcuſs that article. We have yet the works of Joſephus, an able writer, and more able ſtateſman, who never failed to ſacrifice truth to his political views: a ſtriking inſtance we have in his Hiſtory of the Jewiſh Antiquities. In it he artfully diminiſhes the force of the miracles recorded in the Old Teſtament, and throws a ſhade over every thing he thought might give offence to the Heathens. His application of the prophecies concerning the Meſſias, to Veſpaſian, a Heathen Emperor, has damned his memory, without redemption. Yet in his works, however grateful it might have been to his patrons, we find no refutation of the miracles of Chriſt, or his Apoſtles; nor do we find any ſuch refutation in the works of Philo, a better man, though not more favourable to Chriſtianity; its doctrines he profeſſedly rejects: in that book, which he entitled, "Abraham's Migrations," he ſays, there were amongſt the Jews a ſort of people, who thought the laws were nothing elſe but ſigns of ſpiritual things; that they condemned the letter to ſeek the ſpirit; that they endeavoured to aboliſh the ſabbath, circumciſion and feſtivals, introduced by Moſes; that, in their opinion, true circumciſion conſiſted in repreſſing evil deſires and affections. He accuſes theſe innovators of inconſtancy and levity, exhorts his fellow Jews to reſiſt theſe new opinions, and make no change in what had been wiſely eſtabliſhed by their anceſtors.

The ſeverity of his cenſure, on the new doctrine, as ſubverſive of the rites and ceremonies of the Moſaic Law, which the Chriſtians uniformly taught to have been figurative, and to have ceaſed on the eſtabliſhment of the new law, is deciſive evidence that he would have attempted to invalidate the miracles, by which its divine original is atteſted, if he ſaw any probability of ſucceſs. To have mentioned them, without

without a ſolid refutation, would have been ruinous to his cauſe, he therefore wiſely paſſed them unnoticed. This reaſoning is applicable to Joſephus, though the more intelligent Critics judge that paſſage, in which he ſpeaks of Chriſt and his miracles, genuine; it is in his ſtyle; the occaſion required it: ſpeaking of Pilate, he could not with propriety have omitted the moſt remarkable event of his adminiſtration. Euſebius, a moſt diligent writer, cites it, Demon. Evan. Lib. 3, N. 7, and alſo. Hiſt. Ecc. Lib. 1, Cap. 1. Nicephorus—Hiſt. Ecc. Lib. 1, Cap. 1. Suidas—Lex. Art. Joſephē, and Jerom, cite it. Joſephus ſpeaks of John Baptiſt, Lib. 18, Cap. 5, N. 6, and of St. James, the brother of our Lord, Lib. 20, Cap. 9. N. 1. Of theſe teſtimonies, though rejected by ſome modern Critics, there is concluſive evidence: Origen cites them, in his book againſt Celſus, No. 47, which he would not dare to have done, if they were not genuine. They are alſo cited by Euſebius, Hiſt. Ecc. Lib. 2, Cap. 23, and by St. Jerom, De. Scrip. Eccl.

The paſſage is found in the 18th Book of Jewiſh Antiquities, Chap. 3, No. 4, and is thus conceived: "at that time (that is in Pilate's time) was Jeſus, a wiſe man, if it be juſt to call him a man: for he was the effector of wonderful works; the teacher of men, who receive truth with pleaſure; he attracted many Jews and many Gentiles. This was that Chriſt, whom Pilate, on the delation of our chief men, crucified; they who had loved him before did not ceaſe to love him; he appeared to them on the third day, returned to life. Theſe and a thouſand other wonderful things, had been foretold by the Prophets; from him aroſe the nation of Chriſtians, which continues to the preſent day."

There are ſtrong reaſons to ſuſpect an interpolation, but none concluſive. Joſephus did not believe in

Chriſt—true, he did not believe him God equal to his eternal father, as the diſciples did; but it is not clear that he did not believe him to be the Meſſias announced by the Prophets: he moſt certainly did not believe Veſpaſian, a profeſſed idolater, to be the Meſſias, though, courtier like, he flattered him with the title. He might, like his brethren of whom St. John ſpeaks, have believed in him, and not avow it: becauſe, ſays the Evangeliſt, they "loved the glory of men more than the glory of God." John xii, 43.

This teſtimony has not been cited by the primitive apologiſts of chriſtianity. True: they did not reſt the juſtice of their cauſe on the authority of a court flatterer, whoſe duplicity they abhorred. His authority would have no force againſt the heathens, with whom they reaſoned; it might have ſome weight with the Jews; but they did not diſpute the truth of Chriſt's miracles; they aſcribed them to magic, which they had learned in Egypt, and endeavored to elude the force of them under different pretences.

It is ſaid that the chriſtians, in the third century, inſerted the paſſage in Joſephus's work. That is extremely improbable: no reaſon can be aſſigned why the chriſtians ſhould interpolate a work, which they at all times diſregarded, and continue to diſregard. The authority of a court flatterer, who ſacrifices truth to private views, is of little weight for, or againſt, any cauſe. Chriſtian writers adduce vouchers of an unblemiſhed character. It is highly probable that the paſſage was retrenched from many copies by the Jews, becauſe it is not very honorable to themſelves, or their anceſtors.

That Chriſt did not work miracles, at the requiſition of the Phariſees, is true; he diſregarded the deſire of Herod alſo. It was inconſiſtent with his wiſdom to gratify idle curioſity. The miracles, which the

the Pharisees had seen, only served to increase their animosity: "There came to him the blind and the lame, in the temple, and he healed them. The Chief Priests, and Pharisees, seeing the wonderful things which he did, and hearing the children crying out, and saying—Hosanna to the Son of David—were moved with indignation." Math. xxi, 15–16. The signs, which they required, would not diminish the virulence of their ulcerated minds.

If he could not work miracles in his own country, it was not through impotence, but because he could not, with propriety, work miracles amongst an incredulous people, which would have no other effect but to render them inexcusable, we find him reward the piety of some, even there: "he did not work many miracles, on account of their incredulity." Matth. xiii, 58. And Mark, who says that he could not work any miracles, there adds, in the same sentence, that he healed a few sick persons. Mark vi, 5. In the same sense the Angel said to Lot, Gen. xix, 22, "I can do nothing until you go there (to Segor.) The Angel's power was independent on Lot's safety; but he could not, with propriety, exercise his terrible commission until Lot was in a place of safety.

The immediate effect of Christ's miracles was to manifest, to the Jews, the divinity of his mission, and, by necessary consequence, the truth of his doctrine: when he changed the water into wine at Cana: the Evangelist says "he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him," John ii, 11; and he adds, v, 23, "when he was at Jerusalem, at the Passover upon the Festival Day, many believed in his name, seeing the signs which he effected." Hence Nicodemus came at night, and said to him: "Rabbi, we know that you came from God a teacher: for no one can do these signs, which you do, if God be not with him." John

iii.

iii, 2. For the truth of his miſſion Chriſt frequently appealed to his miracles. Thus, John v, 36, he ſaid to the Jews: "But I have a greater teſtimony than that of John: the works, which the father hath given me, that I may effect them: theſe works, which I do, they give teſtimony of me, that the father ſent me. Immediately before he ordered Lazarus to riſe from the tomb, he lift up his eyes to his father, ſaying: "I thank thee that thou haſt heard me; I knew that thou heareſt me always, but becauſe of the people, who ſtand about, have I ſaid it, that they may believe that thou haſt ſent me." John xi, 42.

His miracles, atteſting the divinity of his miſſion, and thereby rendering the truth of his doctrine unqueſtionable, afford concluſive evidence of his divinity. To raiſe to life, or form the organs of ſight, is not within the limits of created power. Hence the blind man, in reply to the Phariſees, ſays: "From the age it has not been heard that any man opened the eyes of one born blind." John ix, 32.

It was not by invocation, but by his own inherent power, that Chriſt effected theſe works, which tranſcend the limits of created power. Hence St. Luke ſays, vi, 19, "a virtue *(dunamis)* went out from him, and healed them all." He taught expreſsly that he was God, one with the father, poſſeſſed of the ſame independent and almighty power; and, in confirmation of this truth, he frequently appealed to his miracles. Thus when the Jews ſurrounded him, in Solomon's porch, and ſaid: "How long will you keep us in ſuſpence? If you be the Chriſt (the Meſſias) tell us plainly. Jeſus anſwered them: I ſpeak to you, and you do not believe me; the works, which I do, in the name of the father, they give teſtimony of me." John x, 25. After declaring that he would give eternal life to his ſheep,

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that no power could wreſt them out of his hands, he aſſigns the reaſon—becauſe no power can wreſt them out of the hand of the father—he immediately adds: *I and the father are one*; that is, one in eſſence, one in power. The Jews took up ſtones to ſtone him for blaſphemy: becauſe, ſaid they, "that, being a man, you make yourſelf God." To which he replied, that in their law the Prophets were, in a certain ſenſe, called Gods, without blaſphemy; that it was not blaſphemy in him, whom God had ſanctified, and ſent into the world, to call himſelf Son of God: "If I do not the works of my father," ſaid he, 37, "believe me not; but if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works: that you may know, and believe, that the father is in me, and I in the father." John x.

He in the ſame manner offered his miracles in proof of his divinity when Philip deſired to ſee the father: "do you not believe ſaid he, that I am in the father and the father in me? Otherwiſe believe me for theſe works," John xiv, 11.

And becauſe theſe his miracles were irreſiſtible proofs of his divinity, he declared that the Jews who perſiſted in their incredulity, were inexcuſable, "if I did not come and ſpeak to them, they would not have ſin; but now they have no excuſe for their ſin. He who hates me, hates my father. If I had not done works in them, which no other did, they would not have ſin; but now they have ſeen, and they hate both me and my father," John XV. 22, &c.

The divinity of Chriſt, manifeſt in his works and words, the Jews refuſed to acknowledge. This article of his doctrine they clearly underſtood, and of all others moſt ſtrenuouſly oppoſed. They perſecuted him for a pretended violation of the ſabbath, becauſe he had healed a ſick man at the pool of Bethſaida

Bethſaida on that day ; but their indignation was increaſed beyond meaſure at his reply, in which his equality with the father was ſtated : " Chriſt replied to them : my father worketh until now, and I alſo work. For this, therefore, the Jews ſought yet more to kill him, not only becauſe he broke the ſabbath, but becauſe he ſaid that God was his proper father, " *Patera idion,*" making himſelf equal to God," John V. 17, and ſeq.

The Jews therefore underſtood his doctrine in the true ſenſe, that he was Son of God by nature, not by adoption : in this latter ſenſe there could have been no accuſation of blaſphemy : for the Jews called themſelves the Sons of God by adoption : " They ſaid then to him : we are not born of fornication, we have one father, God." John viii, 41.

That it was the intended ſenſe is manifeſt—the words can bear no other ſignification—" The father worketh until now, and I work as if he had ſaid though the father had ceaſed on the Sabbath Day, from the works, which he had created, he yet continues to create, and to preſerve his creatures, without a violation of the Sabbath—this, his operation, is mine, in it there is no violation of the Sabbath. So far from diminiſhing the force of an expreſſion, which had excited their indignation, he continued to explain it more clearly : " Then Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid to them : Amen, amen, the Son cannot do any thing of himſelf but what he ſees the father do : for what things ſoever he does, theſe the Son alſo does in like manner ..... as the father raiſes the dead, and gives life, ſo the Son gives life to whom he will ..... that all men may honor the Son as they honor the father—he who does not honor the Son does not honor the father, who ſent him ..... Amen, amen, I ſay unto you, the hour comes, it is now, when the dead ſhall hear

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the voice of the Son of God, and they who will hear ſhall live: for as the father hath life in himſelf, ſo he hath given to the Son to have life in himſelf." *ibidem.*

In the whole of this diſcourſe he claims the ſame power, the ſame honor, the ſame life in himſelf, that is, the ſame eternity, in a word, the ſame divine nature with the father; and, for the truth of this doctrine, he refers them to the teſtimony of the father, manifeſt in his works: "I have," ſaid he, "a greater teſtimony than that of John—the works which the father gave me to effect, theſe works, which I perform give teſtimony of me, that the father ſent me," *ibidem.* Their incredulity he declared inexcuſable, becauſe it was the reſult of groundleſs, and virulent animoſity, condemned by the voice of reaſon: for where there is an exerciſe of the divine power, reaſon, ſays the agent, muſt be God; they ſaw this power in its effects, and obſtinately refuſed to acknowledge the divinity of the agent.

As Chriſt taught by word and example he frequently recommended ſecrecy to thoſe, whom he relieved, giving his diſciples to underſtand that vanity is to have no ſhare in their works. The deſire of popular applauſe is a vice which he ſeverely cenſured in the Phariſees. It is at preſent, as it was then, the ſpring of action in the ſons of pride. Our modern ſceptics, in imitation of their anceſtors, the Heathen Philoſophers, think it a virtue.

Of the miracles of Chriſt many were of ſuch a nature as not to be concealed. The feeding of four or five thouſand people, with a few loaves, the reſurrection of the widow of Naim's ſon, that of Lazarus, and many other miracles, were facts of public notoriety, which could not be concealed.

So public, ſo well atteſted, and ſo univerſally believed were the miracles of Chriſt, that the heathen writers

writers againſt Chriſtianity admitted them: we learn from Origen's firſt book againſt Celſus, No. 49, and ſeq. that this irreconcileable enemy to Chriſtianity believed the miracles of Chriſt genuine, he endeavoured to invalidate their force, under pretence that ſuch prodigies had been effected by magicians.

Porphyrius, not leſs inmical than Celſus, inadvertently acknowledged Chriſt's power over their pretended Gods: "ſince that Jeſus is worſhipped," ſaid he, Ab. Euſ. Preſſ. Evan. Lib. 5°. Cap. 1°, "we can obtain no advantage from the Gods, nor is it wonderful if, after ſo many years, the city be afflicted, ſince Æſculapius and the other Gods are abſent from it.

"That philoſopher," ſays St. Auſtin, De. Liv. Dei. Lib. 19, Cap. 23, No. 2, "ſpeaks well of Chriſt, as if forgetting the contumely of which we have ſpoken; or, as if the Gods in a dream had blaſphemed Chriſt, and, awaking, knew him to be good and worthy of praiſe. Finally, as if going to pronounce ſomething wonderful and incredible, Porphyrius ſays it will appear to ſome extraordinary what we are going to ſay: the Gods have pronounced that Chriſt moſt pious, and made immortal, and remembered him with good words. He then," continues St. Auſtin, "ſubjoins ſome oracles of the Gods blaſphemings Chriſtians, and after this he ſays: to thoſe who aſked if Chriſt was a God, Hecate replied: ſince you know how the immortal ſoul walks after the body, but that which is cut off from wiſdom for ever wanders. That ſoul is of a moſt excellent man for piety, this they (the Chriſtians) adore, truth being far from them." After St. Auſtin had cited ſome other oracles, from Porphyrius, to the honor of Chriſt, though not ſo to Chriſtians, he thus concludes, No. 3, "who does not ſee that theſe oracles were forged

forged by this artful enemy, who, whilſt he praiſes Chriſt, traduces Chriſtians, or, if ſuch anſwers were given by theſe unclean ſpirits, they were intended to preclude the way of ſalvation, in which a man muſt be a Chriſtian.

Hierocles, who, under Diocleſien, perſecuted Chriſtianity with his ſword and his pen, in the book which he inſcribed *Philalethe*, inveighs againſt Chriſtians, who praiſed Chriſt for reſtoring ſight to the blind, and doing other things equally wonderful. He inſtitutes a compariſon between the miracles of Chriſt, and thoſe of Apollonius, of Tyane, after adducing many pretended miracles of this celebrated impoſtor, he thus concludes: "to what end have I commemorated theſe things? That our ſolid and accurate judgment of all things may appear, and the levity of Chriſtians: we do not think him, who has done theſe great things a God, but a man dear and pleaſing to the Gods, they on the contrary for a few prodigies call their Jeſus *God*."

As to the pretended miracles of Apollonius of Tyane, which are ſaid to have been written by his colleague Darias, and repeated by Philoſtratus two hundred years after, from ſome memorials furniſhed by Julia, wife to the Emperor Septimus Severus. They are a tiſſue of abſurd fables, offenſive to common ſenſe. Philoſtratus, who ſeems to have the moſt profound reſpect for his hero, makes him underſtand the language of birds and beaſts, which, he ſays, he learnt from the Arabs. In the 8th chapter of his 4th book, he ſays, that Apollonius, invited to the wedding of his friend Menippas, whilſt they were at table, informed his friend that the bride was a ſhe demon, the ſhe demon immediately diſappeared, leaving them all in conſternation and fear. In this rhapſody there are many tales equally abſurd.

A judicious critic, ſpeaking of Philoſtratus, ſays: his work excites a contempt for the hiſtorian, and indignation againſt the impoſtor, whoſe hiſtory he writes. In defence of the hiſtorian, ſome pretend that it was a romance, which he compoſed for the amuſement of the Empreſs, his benefactreſs.

Even Julian, the apoſtate, whoſe hatred knew no bounds, though he affected to deſpiſe Chriſtians, whom he called Galileans, admitted the miracles of Chriſt. It is true that ill-fated miſcreant was ſo infatuated with the myſterious rites of augurs, ſoothſayers, and magicians, that he thought greater miracles might have been effected by them. Hence he ſays that Chriſt done nothing great, "if it be not thought a great matter that he cured the lame and blind, and adjured ſome people poſſeſſed by demons, in the ſtreets of Bethſaida and Bethania," Ap. Cyr. Lib. 6, Con. Jul.

Whatever ſigns apparently tranſcending the power of man, and exciting his aſtoniſhment, the artful illuſions of Anti-Chriſt, or other falſe Prophets, may ſeem to effect, or the Demon, by his ſagacity in diſcovering natural agents, and his power of transferring them almoſt inſtantaneouſly from places however diſtant, and applying them to ſubjects naturally diſpoſed for their reception, may in reality effect, none can be deceived by theſe ſigns, but thoſe who are willing to be deceived, becauſe they have been told that ſuch ſigns would be given by falſe Prophets, in order to deceive. In the pretended miracles of Anti-Chriſt there will be nothing real: St. Paul expreſsly calls them *lying prodigies*, 2. Theſs. ii. 9. He there aſſigns the reaſon why God will permit theſe illuſions to impoſe on the wicked: "becauſe," ſays he, "they did not receive the charity of truth," that is, the truth in charity. It has been already obſerved, that

that the operation of the Demon, in order to deceive, is one of God's moſt ſevere judgments; but he permits no ſuch operation in his own name, nor in any conjuncture, in which reaſon cannot diſcover the cheat.

Of all facts upon record, in the annals of the world, there is not one ſo well atteſted as the reſurrection of Chriſt, and his aſcenſion into Heaven; his greateſt enemies have, by their exertions to efface his name, rendered the fact of his reſurrection incontrovertible: ſhortly after his interment the Jews, who had conſpired againſt him, came to Pilate, and told him that *the Seducer*, as they called Chriſt, had promiſed to riſe from the dead after three days, if the body ſhould diſappear, this would eſtabliſh all the errors, which he had taught. Pilate directed them to take the guard, and ſecure the ſepulchre. Nothing was omitted which prudence could ſuggeſt. The effect of theſe precautions was to remove the moſt diſtant ſuſpicion of illuſion, and make the moſt inveterate enemies of Chriſt, the firſt witneſſes of his triumph. They did not atteſt the fact; true. Few men are fond to give evidence of their own guilt; but their only ſubterfuge is equal to a confeſſion; the diſciples, ſay they, ſtole the body whilſt the guards ſlept. The teſtimony of a ſleeping witneſs is a mockery, to paſs unnoticed the improbability of a guard of well diſciplined ſoldiers all ſleeping on their poſt at the ſame time, and the impoſſibility of removing a great ſtone from the entrance of the ſepulchre, and carrying off the body, without awaking any one of them.

The falſehood of the ſuppoſition is manifeſt; if the diſciples had ſtolen the body, they muſt have known that he did not riſe from the dead; that he was an impoſtor, who impoſed on their ſimplicity; and,

and, as for his ſake, they had expoſed themſelves to the enmity of their nation, they muſt have then at leaſt abandoned him. The contrary has happened; though they baſely deſerted him before his death, whilſt they had great expectancies from his power; and could hardly prevail on themſelves to believe his reſurrection real, after they had ſeen him, yet, upon conviction of the truth, they were no more to be deterred by threats or tortures, by torments or death. Their words and actions breathe nothing but ſincerity. They did not remove to a diſtant country, nor did they wait until time had effaced the memory of the tranſaction; but whilſt it was yet recent, whilſt the impreſſion of his ignominious death was yet ſtrong on the public mind, they appeared in the temple, where the Prieſts preſided, who were his accuſers, there they atteſted the truth: it was believed by thouſands, and not denied by Chriſt's moſt inveterate enemies. Their charge againſt the principal Jews was of the moſt atrocious kind: "The God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his ſon Jeſus, whom you delivered over, and denied before Pilate, who judged him to be diſmiſſed; but you denied the juſt and the holy one, and deſired a murderer to be granted to you; but the author of life you killed, whom God raiſed from the dead, of which we are witneſſes," Acts iii, 13, 14, 15. An accuſation of a more heinous nature is not upon record in the annals of mankind. And this accuſation is founded on the fact of Chriſt's reſurrection: for if he did not riſe he was an impoſtor, and the Jews were perfectly juſtifiable in putting him to death. The chief prieſts and magiſtrates of the temple aſſembled, and put Peter and John into confinement; the day following the accuſation was repeated, and the fact of the reſurrection, on which it reſted, was aſſerted

asserted in public council before Annas, Caiphas, John, Alexander, and all who were of the Sacerdotal order; there was no denial of the fact, nor any attempt whatsoever to refute it. To pretend that the principal Jews, men of wealth and power, possessed of every possible means of information, would not refute an accusation, reflecting dishonor on themselves, if it were possible, is to mistake the nature of man. Their acquiescence is more than juridical evidence of the truth. It is equally absurd to imagine that Peter and John would make such a charge, and so confidently assert the resurrection of Christ in confirmation of the charge, if they were not well assured of the truth of the fact, and the impossibility of invalidating it by any artifice or evasion.

The candour of the apostles, their labours, their sufferings, their deaths, is conclusive evidence of their sincerity. The bold, and open manner, in which they attest truths destructive of the honor of their nation, damning, without redemption, the memory of the principal Jews, in whose presence they spoke, is equally convincing that, if they intended to deceive, they could not have done it. Impostors have interested views: they had none, they were men of truth. The man who reads their history and denies it, does not know the truth.

Why did not Christ shew himself to all the Jews after his resurrection? There was no necessity. He did not rise for the conviction of the Jews, but for the justification of Christians until the consummation of time; it was therefore necessary that he should convince competent witnesses of the truth of his resurrection; that it should be ascertained to them, and by them, to all nations, beyond the possibility of a doubt: this was effectually done. It was declared by angels, the messengers of Heaven: "He is risen he

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is not here." Luke xxiv. 6. He heard them; he anfwered them; he eat with them; he inſtructed them; he ſhewed them his wounds, from the nails and the ſpear; they touched them; by every poſſible argument he convinced them, that he was riſen in the ſame ſolid body, in which he ſuffered. If he had ſhewn himſelf in the temple it would have convinced the Prieſts: many of them were convinced, and embraced the faith on the teſtimony of the apoſtles; they, who obſtinately perſevered in their incredulity, would not have been convinced by his appearance, and from the abuſe of the favors, which he had ſhewn were not deſerving of more, add to this that the queſtion would again recur if he had ſhewn himſelf in the temple why not in the court? Why not in every ſtreet of the city? Why not in Samaria? And, as the effect of the reſurrection was not to be confined to the Jewiſh people excluſively, why not in Rome, in Athens, &c.? And as all ſucceeding generations were equally intereſted with the then exiſting generation, on the principle laid down by modern ſceptics, Chriſt's appearance would have been neceſſary at all times, and in all places. A leader of the ſquad thought it incumbent on Chriſt to appear to himſelf; the writer ventures to aſſure him that he will, in due time, not to gratify idle curioſity, but to chaſtiſe arrogance and impiety.

The credulity of an ignorant populace is the laſt reſource of our ſophiſts. There is nothing, ſay they, which the populace will not eaſily believe, if it be told by men of influence: thus the Romans believed Julius Proculus, that Romulus had deſcended from the Heavens to inform him, that he was amongſt the Gods; not only the populace, but the ſenate ordered a temple to be built in honour of the new God. Alexander declaring that Hepheſtion, was deified,

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was believed by the courtiers, and ſhortly after it was believed by himſelf: thus the Apoſtles imagined that Chriſt roſe from the dead, and the populace believed them without farther diſcuſſion.

It is true, a credulous populace eaſily believes what flatters their paſſions, if aſſerted by men of confidence. The enrolment of Romulus, Hepheſtion, or any other pretended divinity, only encreaſed their amuſements, and was accompanied by no reſtraints, they were of courſe received with acclamation, without examination or diſcuſſion. The Senators were ſtrongly, and in all probability juſtly, ſuſpected of having diſpoſed of Romulus in a clandeſtine manner, it is not matter of ſurpriſe that they pretended to believe Proculus, who was employed by them for the expreſs purpoſe of removing the ſuſpicion; but when we ſee the Jewiſh Prieſts, not the populace, ſilent under an accuſation reflecting the utmoſt diſhonour on themſelves, the moſt intelligent amongſt them convinced of the Reſurrection, on which the charge was ſupported, the idea of popular credulity vaniſhes, an emotion of ſurpriſe at the perverſe obſtinacy of the incredulous ſucceeds. How our Sceptics diſcovered that the Diſciples were of the loweſt orders of ſociety, we are a loſs to conjecture: was Gamaliel, Nicodemus, or Joſeph, of Arimathea, of the loweſt order? Were Stephen, Barnaby, Luke, and Paul, of the populace? Was that immenſe body of the Sacerdotal order, who embraced the faith of the credulous herd? If we may judge of a writer by his works, Luke and Paul were men of ſcience, as far ſuperior to Sceptical ſcribblers, as theſe are to their brother monkeys.

Let us admit the Diſciples were ſuch as our Sceptics ſuppoſe them, ignorant and credulous, how did theſe ignorant and credulous men impoſe their apparently

parently and incredible doctrines on the moſt incredulous of men, the Heathen Philoſophers? How did they enforce obedience to their injunctions, which are confeſſedly full of the moſt mortifying reſtraints? Theſe are embarraſſing queſtions.

The reſurrection of Chriſt, and other ſpeculative doctrines of his religion, were in direct oppoſition to the received opinions of the world, its moral maxims equally inimical to the eſtabliſhed maxims of the world, beatifying poverty, humility, chaſtity, modeſty, meekneſs and patience; denouncing the divine vengeance, againſt avarice, ambition, incontinence, and all the prevailing paſſions of man; it propoſed nothing leſs than the total abolition of idolatry, the deſtruction of all the Heathen temples, the ſuppreſſion of all ſuperſtitious rites and ceremonies, which had been univerſally eſtabliſhed by immemorial cuſtom, authorized and confirmed by Legiſlatures, interwoven with the fundamental laws of Kingdoms and States, flattering all the inclinations of man. Add to this, that theſe doctrines, ſo apparently incredible, and theſe moral maxims, in reality ſo inimical to corrupt nature, were taught by men of no influence; in their own country, hated and perſecuted; amongſt the Heathen nations deſpiſed; oppoſed by wealth, power, intereſt, ſcience, and every artifice, which the malice of the Demon could invent. Theſe difficulties, to human power invincible, were ſurmounted by the irreſiſtible evidence of Chriſt's Reſurrection.

His aſcenſion is a fact atteſted as forcibly, and with the ſame ſucceſs. In it there is no room for deception: the witneſſes were numerous; they could not have been all ſubject to the ſame illuſion at the ſame inſtant of time. He had ſpoken to them, he had eaten with them, he had conducted them from the

the city through Bethania to the mountain of Olives, and there, bleſſing them, he aſcended in their view. See the relation, Acts i.

It is not in the nature of things that ſo many witneſſes would conſpire to atteſt a fact, knowing it to be a fiction, without having ſome great intereſt in view. The Apoſtles could have no temporal intereſt in view: from the Jews, whoſe ſanguine hopes of the re-eſtabliſhment of their empire, they blaſted, and whoſe total deſtruction they foretold, they could promiſe themſelves nothing; from the Heathens, whoſe rites they ſuppreſſed, whoſe augurs, ſoothſayers, oracles and temples, they taught the people to deſpiſe, the vanity and emptineſs of whoſe pretended Gods and Goddeſſes they expoſed, the folly of whoſe ſuppliants they ridiculed, the artifices of whoſe officers they diſcloſed, from theſe once more they could expect nothing but what they obtained, that is, chains, tortures and death. Their object therefore muſt have been, as they aſſerted, the converſion of ſouls, and the ſanctification of their own. It is true, they promiſed happineſs to their diſciples, as they did to themſelves, but not in this world, and it would have been madneſs to expect happineſs in an after life, for teaching that for truth, which they knew to be falſe. The doctrine they taught was therefore true; and when they declared that "the anger of God is revealed from Heaven againſt impiety," Rom. i. 18, our Sceptics will find it but too true.

From Juſtin's apology, addreſſed to the Emperor, the Senate, and Roman people, we learn that Tiberius had been informed by Pilate of the principal occurrences of Chriſt's miſſion in Judea; after relating many of theſe tranſactions, he ſays, No. 7, "that theſe things have happened you may learn

from the acts of Pontius Pilate." The same assertion he repeats, No. 48. We know that it was invariably the custom for the Governors of Provinces, to transmit to the Emperor a circumstantial account of singular incidents. Pilate cannot be presumed to have omitted it, and Justin would not have dared to appeal to the public records if he were not well assured the facts were registered, nor would his adversary, Crescentius, the cynic, a most malignant censor, have passed such a mistake unnoticed.

Tertullian also, a writer well versed in the Roman laws, says, in his Apologetic, Cap. 21°, No. 7, "that Pilate himself, a Christian in conscience, had reported to the Emperor Tiberius the most memorable occurrences of Christ's mission." He adds, in the same Apology, that Tiberius proposed the Divinity of Christ to the Senate, "with the prerogative of his own suffrage." The Senate refused to ratify it. Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, cites these facts from Tertullian, whose authority he thought unexceptionable: "when," says Eus. Lib. 2, Cap. 2, "the wonderful resurrection of Christ and his ascension into Heaven was published by the voice of all people, as it was an old custom with the Governors of Provinces to transmit an account of every new occurrence to the Emperor, that nothing might be concealed, Pilate informed Tiberius of the resurrection of Christ, the fame of which was celebrated over all Palestine; he at the same time signified to the Prince, that he had heard of many other miracles, and that after his return to life he was held by many to be a God; it is said that Tiberius referred the matter to the Senate, and they rejected the proposal, because he had been declared God without waiting their authority, and there was an old law forbidding any person to be a God without a decree

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of the Senate. This was the apparent reaſon, but in reality becauſe the preaching of the divine doctrine did not want the authority or the counſel of men. Though the Senate had rejected the propoſal, as was ſaid, Tiberius, perſiſting in his opinion, decreed nothing harſh againſt the doctrine of Chriſt. Theſe things Tertullian, a writer well verſed in the Roman laws, and amongſt Latin writers the moſt celebrated, ſtates in his Apologetic."

Some of our modern Legiſlatures declare that no doctrine is true but that which they find convenient to approve; the Roman ſenate went one ſtep farther: they made the divinity ſelf dependant on their decree. The impiety of this law is ſurpaſſed, if poſſible, by its folly. The candidate is introduced canvaſing for votes, if he cannot obtain a majority he falls from all his pretenſions to the divinity. *Si hominibus non placet deus non erit.*

There is a letter from Pilate to Tiberius re porting the miracles of Chriſt; it is thought by ſome modern critics to be ſuppoſed though cited by Tertullian. The writer has not ſeen concluſive evidence of the ſuppoſition. There is no modern critic better verſed in the hiſtory of Rome, and its laws than Tertullian, a profeſſed lawyer, and eminent in the profeſſion; no modern critic has, or can pretend to have the ſame ſources of information, which he poſſeſſed, if the letter tranſmitted to us be that, which he cites, and is cited on his authority by Euſebius, a moſt intelligent author, the writer is ſtrongly inclined to prefer their authority to the ſilly conjectures of any modern, or of all modern critics. Whatever objections may be ſtated againſt Tertullian, none can be againſt Juſtin, who appealed to the public acts.

Tiberius, though corrupt in his morals and ſanguinary in his diſpoſitions, was neither ignorant, nor

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inattentive to the duties of an Emperor; and Pilate, who, if Philo and Joſephus tell truth, was little inferior to his maſter, was too deeply verſed in politics to conceal from the tyrant's ear tranſactions, which he knew muſt reach it through ſome other channel. It cannot be ſuppoſed, with any appearance of probability, that Chriſt's death and the rumour of his reſurrection was not reported to the Emperor.

Whether the letter be genuine, or ſuppoſed, is of little conſequence: the truth of chriſtianity does not reſt on the authority of a Tiberius or a Pilate; it is totally independent of the teſtimony of a Juſtin, a Tertullian, or an Euſebius.

However unexceptionable the miracles of Chriſt, however candid and ſincere the Apoſtles, yet as the religion, which they taught, was deſtructive of all the ſyſtems of religion then eſtabliſhed by laws and cuſtoms in the world; in its ſpeculative doctrines inconceiveable, and in its moral precepts full of mortifying reſtraints, they never could obtain credit on their bare aſſertion in theſe countries, where Chriſt himſelf or his miracles were not known; their teſtimony therefore muſt have been accompanied by ſigns, which authenticated their miſſion, and inſured their followers againſt illuſion. In Judea where they firſt began to preach, the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt under the appearance of fiery tongues, and the permanent effect of this temporary appearance, was a ſufficient voucher; the aſſembly was too numerous to be ſubject to any illuſion, and the effect, ſuch as omnipotence alone could produce: it is not poſſible that an ignorant man, by any powers inherent in human nature, ſhould inſtantaneouſly acquire a knowledge of different languages: and, much leſs, that he ſhould be underſtood by men of different languages at the ſame time. This was the firſt miracle in atteſtation of

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the truth of the Apoſtle's miſſion ; and its immediate effect was the converſion of three thouſand. Acts ii. If the reader wiſhes to ſee the miracles, which God wrought by his Apoſtles, in many different countries, let him read the Acts of the Apoſtles written by St. Luke, and atteſted by the acceptation of all the Churches in the different countries where, and in whoſe preſence, theſe miracles were wrought.

Impiety is forced to admit that the Apoſtles did convert many thouſands in different countries to the faith. To pretend that theſe converſions were wrought without miracles ; or that ſo many thouſands of men, who had eyes and ears as we have, were taught to believe that miracles were wrought in their preſence, though no ſuch thing had happened, is a manifeſt abſurdity, which is refuted by contempt. There have been ſuppoſed miracles. True, the writer is willing to admit that ſome dupes have been deceived by impoſtors : there are many ſuch in all countries to this preſent day, and in all appearance will continue to the end ; but that of all the men ſo celebrated for ſcience, ſanctity, and diſintereſted views, who have atteſted theſe miracles of the Apoſtles, and of their diſciples, there was not one honeſt man ; and that all theſe thouſands of thouſands of Chriſtians, who compoſed the primitive Church, were dupes and impoſtors ; there is ſomething ſo wild in the thought, ſo extravagantly impudent in the aſſertion, that a man who has any remains either of modeſty or common ſenſe, would not dare to make it. And if it be admitted, that any one of all theſe, told truth, impiety falls defenceleſs. How deſperate the cauſe, in defence of which, even the impudence of the Atheiſt, and the effrontery of the Deiſt, is abaſhed !

From the miracles of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, let us paſs to his prophecies. It is univerſally admitted that,

that, contingent events depending on the joint action of many free and concurring causes, are not within the range of limited prescience. Such events were foretold by Christ, and promises made by him, which almighty power alone could fulfil. The events have happened as foretold, and the promises fulfilled. Our Sceptics, however unwilling, are witnesses to both.

The writer passes unnoticed all these predictions, and promises, which were fulfilled before the Gospels were written, to obviate the pretence that these might have been supposed by the writers, the falsehood of this calumny is manifest, not only from the sincerity of the Evangelical writers, but because they wrote nothing but the doctrine, which they had already taught verbally; and if their writings contained a doctrine differing from what they had verbally taught, or included predictions, or promises, of which the Churches had not previously heard, they would have been rejected as spurious. The acceptation of all the Churches is the most authentic evidence of the truth of the New Testament, and the veracity of its writers. The same doctrine, which the Evangelists wrote, was taught by all the Apostles, who did not write, and continues to be taught in the same manner, by their successors.

Christ expressly foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, the manner of its destruction, and even limited the time. "The days will come on thee, said he, and thy enemies will surround thee with a line of circumvallation, '*charaka*' and they will encompass thee and straiten thee on every side, and will level thee to the ground, and thy children, *who are in thee*," Luke xix. 42. We know that Jerusalem, the 40th year after Christ's death, was destroyed by Titus. He cast up entrenchments, and a wall, which so closely

closely invested the city that none could escape. In that memorable siege 1,300,000 souls perished. See Josephus, Lib. 6 and 7. Such an event could not have been foreseen but by him, who has all events on his disposal.

As the Jews were numerous, obstinate and discontented, subject to be deluded by impostors, who assumed the title of their expected deliverer, a man of great sagacity might suspect a rebellion; but that the city would be surrounded by a line of circumvallation, and totally destroyed by the first army, that invested it, as Christ said Luke xxi. 20. "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by an army know that then its desolation is near," whilst the then generation lived. "I say unto you all these things will came on this generation," Luke xii. 36, was contrary to all rules of probability and beyond the range of conjecture.

To this, first, Christ added a second prediction, more remote from probability, that is, that though Jerusalem would be destroyed, and not one stone left on the other, her sons and daughters dispersed, would continue to exist until the consummation of time: after giving a description of that alarming scene, he adds, "Amen, I say unto you, that this generation (the Jewish people) will not pass away until all these things are done," Matt. xxiv. 34. Hence we find St. Paul declaring that blindness in part has happened in Israel, until the fulness of nations should come in, and thus all Israel shall be saved," Rom. xi. 25, 26. Will our Sceptics condescend to admit the first part of this prophecy, that is, the fulness of nations is coming in, and that the blindness of the Jews continues yet? For their conversion we must wait the consummation.

If the Jew were not invincibly obstinate he could

hardly

hardly reſiſt the evidence of another prophecy, the truth of which he knows by 1800 hundred years experience: "the law and the Prophets, ſaid Chriſt, Luke xvi, 16, until John" or, as it is in Matthew: "for all the Prophets, and the law prophecied until John," xi, 12. During the Jewiſh diſpenſation their law was ſupported, and the obſervance of it enforced by the Prophets, who appeared in regular ſucceſſion at different intervals, until John began to preach. The ſucceſſion was then interrupted, and the miſſion of Prophets to the Jews ceaſed, according to the words of Chriſt, ſo that the Atheiſt or the Deiſt is not more ſteeled againſt conviction than the unfortunate Jew.

This unanſwerable argument, drawn from the diſperſion of the Jews, and their obſtinate adherence to their law, has exerciſed the imagination of our modern Sceptics, whoſe inventive faculties are ſtretched but to deceive themſelves. They find, or pretend to find, many reaſons for this continuation of the Jews, diſtinct from all other people. Their fancy, ſay they, is fed by the hopes of a deliverer, who will reinſtate their empire, and their temple; they carefully avoid inter-marriages with other people; they are firmly attached to their law; and though they ſee the Chriſtian religion flouriſh, yet they think their own rites and ceremonies more majeſtic. To theſe reaſons the reply is ſimple: hopes diſappointed, in courſe of years ſubſide. A continuation of the Jewiſh hopes after eighteen centuries continued diſappointment, is neither natural, nor reaſonable, the ſource of ſuch extravagance muſt be found elſewhere, that is, in the malediction attached to that ill-fated race. They are the deſcendants of thoſe anceſtors, who, thirſting after the blood of innocence, to which Pilate, a ſanguinary tyrant, with reluctance gave his ſanction, exclaimed:

claimed: "let his blood be on us, and our children," Matt. xxvii, 25.

Their ſeveral attempts to build the temple have proved ineffectual, and ruinous to themſelves: Julian's project, in oppoſition to Chriſt's prophecy, only ſerved literally to verify it.

That Julian did intend to rebuild the temple, we have incontrovertible evidence in his letter to the Jews, ſtill extant in his works, No. 25. It is mentioned by Sozomen, and tranſlated by Doctor Cave, in his life of St. Cyril. In it, after relieving them from all taxes, and burdens, he enjoins diligence, and promiſes that, after his Perſian expedition, he would fix his reſidence in Jeruſalem, and offer his joint prayers with them. The artifice and hypocriſy of the apoſtate, and conſequent exertions of the Jews, have rendered the truth of Chriſt's prediction inconteſtible: Chriſt had declared, Matt. xxiv, 2, that one ſtone of the temple would not be left on the other. After the deſtruction, by Titus, the foundations and ſome ruins of the walls remained: Euſebius ſays, Dom. Evan. Lib. 8o. that in his time the inhabitants frequently carried off the ſtones for private buildings. All theſe ruins, and the very foundations, were removed by the Jews, under Julian's direction, in order to recommence the work, from which they were deterred by flames iſſuing from the foundations, which at firſt only deſtroyed the works; but when the Jews obſtinately perſiſted in the deſign, they conſumed the workmen alſo. This fact is authentic if there be truth in man: Ammianus Marcellinus, an unprejudiced Heathen, ſays, Lib. 3, Cap. 1, that Julian undertook the work to immortalize his reign; he adds, Lib. 23, Cap. 1, that tremendous balls of fire, iſſuing from the earth, near the foundations, rendered the place inacceſſible

to the workmen. His terms are ſtrongly expreſſive —*hocque modo elemento deſtinatius repellente*—in this manner the element in a more determined manner repelling them. The concurring teſtimony of cotemporary writers, removes all ſuſpicion. Chry. adv. Jud. Or. 2, and Hom. 4 in Matt. Nazian, Or. 2, and 4, in Jul.

Chryſoſtome ſays that the Jews at three different times attempted the building of their temple, under Adrian, which encreaſed the enmity of the Heathens, and brought deſtruction on the Jews; again under Conſtantine, who diſperſed them, cut off their ears, and branded them with the mark of rebellion; and finally, ſaid he, in our time, not above twenty years ago, in which God himſelf baffled their endeavours, to ſhew that no human power could reverſe his decrees, and that at a time when our religion was oppreſſed, lay under the axe, and had not the liberty to ſpeak, that impudence itſelf might not have the leaſt ſhadow of pretence. See a circumſtantial account of this memorable event, in the life of St. Cyril, by Butler.

That the Jews avoid inter-marriages with chriſtians is true, but whether from choice or neceſſity is doubtful: in chriſtian countries ſuch marriages are prohibited by law, and in all countries they are null of right. As to their rites and ceremonies, however majeſtic, whilſt the temple exiſted, ſince its deſtruction, they cannot be performed: theſe, therefore, cannot fix the attention of the Jews. Finally, whatever reaſons may be aſſigned for the continuation of the Jews, as a diſtinct people, the force of the prophecy is not the leſs invincible: becauſe to foreſee that theſe reaſons would be permanent, and the effect perpetually correſpondent, is beyond the ſphere of limited ſcience.

Let us now paſs from the Jews to the Gentiles: Chriſt

Chriſt ordered his Apoſtles to teach all nations, or, as it is in the Greek text, *to make them diſciples*—"*Matheleuſate*"—promiſing that he would be with them until the conſummation. Matt. ult. They immediately commenced the work, and carried his faith and name beyond the limits of the Roman Empire, into nations where the Roman name was not known: of this the monuments are univerſal, and the work as yet continues in the hands of their ſucceſſors. In this ſhort ſentence there is a promiſe which Omnipotence alone could fulfil, and a truth announced which God only could foreſee—that is, that Chriſt's miſſionaries would continue until the conſummation, and that they would form his diſciples in all nations. He was promiſed all nations as an inheritance, not all the men of all nations; if there be a nation, which was not yet enlightened by his goſpel, it will before the conſummation: the paſt enſures the future. Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples: "You will be brought before Kings and Governors for my ſake, in teſtimony to them, and to nations," Matt. x, 18. Impiety will not diſpute the accompliſhment of this prophecy. Chriſt, therefore, foreſaw that his diſciples would perſevere in the doctrine, which he taught in the face of perſecution, in defiance of deſpotic power. He alſo foreſaw that Kings and Governors would perſecute his diſciples: if he had conſulted the rules of probability, and offered a conjecture, he would have ſaid that Epicureans, whoſe principles are ſubverſive of order, and whoſe conduct ſets decency at defiance, or Peripatetics, who teach that prayers and ſacrifices are uſeleſs, would be arraigned before Kings and Governors; but that his diſciples, whom he ordered to be as harmleſs as doves, whoſe whole line of conduct, as preſcribed by him, and ſtrictly obſerved by them, breathed nothing but meekneſs, humility, ſubmiſſion, fidelity and obedience, to the ruling powers, ſhould be the objects of hatred,

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of calumny and perfecution, is not matter of conjecture: there is but God, who knows the intenfe malignity of man, and the depravity of his heart, who could foreſee, that truth, innocence and juſtice, would be excluſively and univerſally the object of his hatred.

The writer adds one prediction more, againſt which even the effrontery of the modern ſcioliſt will not venture to ſtate an objection. When Mary, ſiſter to Lazarus, had poured the precious ointment on Chriſt's feet, and Judas expreſſed his indignation at, what his avarice called a profuſion, Chriſt ſaid: "Amen, I ſay unto you, whereſoever this goſpel is preached in the whole world, that alſo, which ſhe has done will be told in memory of her," Mat. xxvi, 13, John xii. In this ſhort ſentence there are two ſolemn promiſes: That the Goſpel would be preached all over the world; and that Mary's piety would be remembered in all places where the Goſpel is preached. Theſe promiſes, which nothing ſhort of Almighty power could fulfil, are ſo manifeſtly accompliſhed, that the obſtinacy of the modern Philoſophiſt is not more odious than contemptible.

If ſanctity, eſtabliſhed by miracles, authenticated by prophecy, confirmed by the accompliſhment of promiſes beyond the ſphere of limited power, ſpeak the divinity, the ſcriptures are divinely inſpired. In them are many things impervious to human reaſon; but there is nothing more reaſonable than to believe on the teſtimony of infallible authority, though reaſon from its limited nature cannot detect the principles, from which the propoſed truth reſults. Thus in human ſcience the Aſtronomer ſhews the denſity of the earth to be greater than that of the planet Jupiter. The principles from which he deduces this truth, though evident to the aſtronomer, are as impervious to the unlearned peaſant as any myſtery in religion.

The

The mathematician demonſtrates that the branches of the hyperbollic curve approach inceſſantly its aſſymptots, but can never touch them; this laſt propoſition, though mathematically true, has all the appearance of a contradiction; that God as far ſurpaſſes man, in knowledge as the aſtronomer does the peaſant, is denied but by him, who does not believe a God to exiſt; that truths are known to him, of which man can form no idea is equally certain; to pretend that, he, who has enabled man by ſounds to convey his ideas to other men, or with his pen to paint them for future generations, cannot make himſelf underſtood, is an abſurdity which is refuted by contempt not by argument. As truth, is not oppoſite to truth, if we clearly conceive a truth, which we think oppoſite to revelation, we are not thence to conclude that there is any thing falſe in revelation, but that we have miſtaken the intended ſenſe of the inſpired writer; that the truth, which we think oppoſite to revelation is only oppoſite to that ſenſe, which we ourſelves affix to it. Thus we are frequently deceived, and yet more frequently in thinking that a manifeſt truth, in which there is a latent fallacy, which our reaſon cannot detect. Truths revealed by God are not ſubject to the examination of human reaſon; the proper uſe of reaſon is to inquire whether the propoſition propoſed be revealed by God or not; or whether it be propoſed in the ſenſe intended by the inſpired writer; but to inquire whether a propoſition revealed by God be true or falſe is a ſtretch of impudence, which no term in language can expreſs.

There are in the ſcriptures many truths revealed, which, though in appearance within the ſphere of human reaſon, have not been diſcovered by reaſon in its degraded ſtate: the unity of God, his immenſity, many of the divine perfections, which the chriſtian philoſopher

philoſopher, previouſly inſtructed by revelation, demonſtrates on ſound principles of reaſon without recourſe to religion. We do not find that the moſt intelligent amongſt the Heathens had a diſtinct idea of theſe perfections: their language is always obſcure, and ambiguous on the ſubject, and interſperſed with ridiculous errors.

The clemency of God, and his vigilant attention to the perfection of his creatures, is manifeſt in the relation of theſe very truths, which reaſon, unaſſiſted by a ſuperior light, might, perhaps, with great exertions, diſcover, and making them objects of faith; thus at once removing every ſhade of error, and illuſion, to which human reaſon is ſubject in the inveſtigation of truth. If truth were attainable but by demonſtration, many eſſential truths, or to ſpeak correctly, all truths, which have for their object the divine nature, or its perfections, would remain in total obſcurity amongſt the unlearned, who compoſe an incalculable majority of the human ſpecies: they do not underſtand the force of demonſtration, and even amongſt the learned, theſe truths would remain in a ſtate of uncertainty; however intelligent, and even unprejudiced they may be ſuppoſed, from the limitation of the human underſtanding, and the verſatility of the imagination, there is a character of uncertainty inſeparably annexed to it. A ſhade of error is latent in whatever is inveſtigated by human reaſon. Probable, or ſophiſtical reaſons, are miſtaken for demonſtration, and erroneous concluſions ſet in oppoſition to ſimple truth.

The irreconcileable differences and altercations of the Heathen philoſophers, and their deſcendants the modern ſquad, not only on abſtruſe, and difficult queſtions, but on firſt principles and intuitive truths, ſufficiently juſtify the obſervation.

If

If reaſon acting within its own ſphere, be an uncertain guide in abſtruſe inquiries, it muſt of neceſſity miſlead, if it tranſgreſſes the bounds, which God and nature have preſcribed. However in referring us to proper authority it ſeldom miſleads: thus reaſon tells us, that we muſt conſult witneſſes to be aſſured of the truth of facts; in like manner it hands us to revelation for truths, which God only knows, and makes known. Theſe divine perfections, which tranſcend human reaſon, the origin of the world, the creation of man, his primitive deſtination, tranſgreſſion and puniſhment, the incarnation of the divine wiſdom for his reconciliation, an event ſo remote from man's ideas, ſo far tranſcending his thoughts, that it never could have entered into his imagination, the divinity of which is manifeſt on the expoſition; theſe, and many other truths, intimately connected with our being, on which our happineſs eſſentially depend, are not ſubjects of metaphyſical diſquiſition: they are facts, and known, as all facts are, by teſtimony: in the ſcriptures we have the teſtimony of God, an unerring authority; to it reaſon muſt refer us.

The writers of the New Teſtament are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James and Jude. There is a difference in their ſtyle, but a perfect coincidence in the principal facts, which they relate, and in all the maxims of religion and morality, which they inculcate. The rage of modern ſcepticiſm, which ſubſtitutes ſuſpicions and ſurmiſes to proof, ſuſpects, or pretends to ſuſpect, that they were not the authors of the books aſcribed to them. This ſurmiſe is refuted by contempt. The works of Cæſar, of Curtius, of Terence, of Plautus, are believed authentic, without a contradiction, we do not diſpute the works of Collins, of Tindal, of Prieſtley, of Price, and to deſcend to the moſt ignorant of

of ſcurrilous ſcribblers, we leave Tom Paine in peaceable poſſeſſion of his Age of Reaſon.

The Heathen writers againſt Chriſtianity admitted the books to have been written by the Evangeliſts, and Apoſtles, to whom they are aſcribed, nor did they deny abſolutely the miracles related in them: they endeavoured to elude the force of Chriſt's miracles, by aſcribing them to magic.

"Celſus," ſays Origen, Lib. 2, No. 48, "now very often, becauſe he could not deny the miracles which it is written that Chriſt performed, calumniates them as the effect of magical deluſions, we have often times ſhewn the contrary, now he aſks us why we judge him to be God, and he imputes to us this anſwer; becauſe he cured the lame and blind, to this adds, and becauſe, as you ſay, he raiſed the dead. That the lame and the blind were cured by Jeſus, that hence we believe him Son of God is manifeſt from this, that it is written in the prophecies: "then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the deaf ſhall hear, and the lame ſhall bound like the roe," Iſa. xxxv, 5.

Julian, the apoſtate, as cited by St. Cyril, Lib. 16, in prim. ſays: "neither Paul dared to call that Jeſus, God, nor Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark; but the good man John, when he diſcovered that a great multitude, in moſt cities of Greece and Italy, were catched with that diſeaſe, and heard, I think privately, it is true; but yet he heard that the monuments of Peter and Paul were worſhipped, firſt dared to aſſert it."—That is, John firſt dared to ſay that Jeſus was God. The apoſtate, like our modern ſophiſts, contradicts himſelf: for if numbers were taken with that diſeaſe, as he calls it, in moſt cities of Greece and Italy, before John wrote, he could not have been the firſt to avow it.

From

From Celſus and Julian, the moſt irreconcileable enemies of the chriſtian name, we learn that the primitive chriſtians believed Chriſt to be God, and that a religious reſpect was paid to the relics of the ſaints. No heathen ever denied the Goſpels to have been written by the Evangeliſts, or that they were thought divinely inſpired, by Chriſtians. The firſt apologiſts of chriſtianity cited them inceſſantly without a contradiction; cotemporary writers cite the Goſpels, and aſcribe them to the Evangeliſts; Clement, in his epiſtle to the Corinthians; Polycarp, in his letter to the Philippians; Ignatius, in his ſeven epiſtles, which are confeſſedly genuine; Papias, as cited by Euſebius.

St. Irenæus, in his third book againſt hereſies, ſays: "Matthew, amongſt the Hebrews, wrote the Goſpel in their language, when Peter and Paul preached at Rome, and founded the Church. After their departure, Mark, who was Peter's diſciple, and interpreter, delivered to us in writing, what was taught by Peter. Luke, who was Paul's diſciple, wrote the Goſpel which was preached by him, and John, the diſciple of the Lord, who had leaned on his breaſt, wrote the Goſpel at Epheſus, in Aſia.

There were Goſpels ſuppoſed by impoſtors, whilſt ſome of the Apoſtles were yet living, but they were immediately rejected as ſpurious. An impoſition was impoſſible, becauſe the autographs of the Evangeliſts were in the hands of the Churches, which they had formed, and atteſted copies in the hands of all other Churches.

The immenſe number of authentic copies, and the care with which they were preſerved by the Church, at all times, ſhews the impoſſibility of ſuppoſition or interpolation, in every age of the Church ſince its firſt eſtabliſhment. On this principle Irenæus ſays:

" we know the diſpoſition of ſalvation but through thoſe, by whom the Goſpel came to us," and Clement, of Alexandria, Lib. 3, Stro. ſpeaking of ſome pretended Goſpel of the Egyptians, ſays ; " firſt we have not this ſaying in the four Goſpels, which are tranſmitted to us, but in that which is according to the Egyptians."

Tertullian, writing againſt Marcion, who admitted but the Goſpel of St. Luke, ſays, Lib. 4, Cap. 5 : the ſame authority of the Apoſtolical Churches authenticates the other Goſpels ; " it is by them, and through them, that we have the Goſpels, that is of John, of Matthew, that of Mark is ſaid to be of Peter, whoſe interpreter he was ; that digeſted by Luke, is uſually aſcribed to Paul." And in the 26th chapter of his Preſcriptions, he ſays that the autographs of the Apoſtles were yet in the hands of the Apoſtolical Churches : " Paſs through the Apoſtolical Churches where the Sees of the Apoſtles hold a Preſidency in their places, where their authentic letters are yet recited, ſounding their voice, and repreſenting the face of each of them. If Achaia be near, you have Phillippi, you have Theſſalonica. If you go to Aſia, you have Epheſus, if to Italy, you have Rome."

Origen, as cited by Euſebius, Lib. 6°, Hiſt. Eccl. cap. 25, ſays : " From tradition I have received four Goſpels, which are admitted by the univerſal church without a controverſy—the firſt was written by Matthew, formerly a publican, and afterwards an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, who wrote it in Hebrew, and publiſhed it to the Jews converted to the faith : the ſecond is that of Mark, who wrote as Peter had preached : and, for that reaſon, Peter, in his catholic epiſtle, acknowledges him as his ſon : ' The Church elect of God, which is in Babylon, ſalutes you, and my ſon Mark ;'

Mark ;' the third Goſpel is that of Luke, recommended by St. Paul, and written for the Gentiles ; the laſt is that of John."

And in his firſt homily, on St. Luke, he ſays, " that as there were ſome falſe prophets amongſt the Jews, ſo there were ſome pretended prophets amongſt Chriſtians." " Many," ſays he, " endeavoured to write Goſpels, but were not all received ; that you may know that, not only four Goſpels, but many have been written, from which the four, which we have, were ſelected and delivered to the Church."

Attend to St. Luke's preface, which is thus ſtated : " ſince many endeavoured to order a narration . . . . . as he ſays ' endeavoured,' it contains a latent accuſation againſt theſe, who undertook to write a Goſpel without a grace of the Holy Ghoſt. Matthew, Mark, John and Luke, did not endeavour to write, but, full of the Holy Ghoſt, they wrote the Goſpels. Many, therefore, *endeavoured* to form a narration of theſe things. The Church has four Goſpels, hereſy has many, of theſe, one is according to the Egyptians, another according to the twelve Apoſtles. Baſilides dared to write a Goſpel, and entitle it with his own name. Many endeavoured to write, and many endeavoured to form a narration, but four Goſpels are approved."

Euſebius, in the third book of his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, Ch. 24th, ſays : " of all the Diſciples of the Lord, Matthew and John alone left us written commentaries. It is ſaid that they were impelled to write by ſome neceſſity : for when Matthew had firſt preached the faith to the Hebrews, and was prepared to go from thence to other nations, he wrote his Goſpel in his country language, to ſupply by that inſtrument, which he left, what ſeemed wanting to his preſence. After this, when Mark and Luke had written

written their Goſpels ſeparately, it is ſaid, that John, who had hitherto preached by word only, betook himſelf to write. The three former Goſpels he is ſaid to have approved and confirmed by his teſtimony."

The hiſtorian aſſigns the reaſon, which induced John to write his Goſpel. It is perfectly conſiſtent with the author. He only relates ſome events, which they omitted, and omits ſome, which they related.

The Acts of the Apoſtles were written by St. Luke: they are addreſſed to Theophilus, as was the Goſpel, and by the ſame writer, and are of equal authority. They are cited by all early writers. St. Auſtin, in his Treatiſe on St. John, ſays: "that canonical book is to be read in the Church every year."

Our ſceptics complain of the ſtyle of the evangeliſts; that they did not obſerve the ſame order in their narration; that they cite paſſages from the old teſtament which are not to be found; thus Matthew ſays, ii, 23, "That might be fulfilled what was ſaid by the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarean;" and, xxvii, 9, he cites a paſſage from Jeremy, which was written by Zachary. They add, that the ſalutations, and ſome exhortations, in the epiſtles, do not ſavour of the gravity of an inſpired writer; for inſtance, Paul deſires Timothy to bring him a ſhort coat, ſome books and papers; they find other cauſes of ſuſpicion, which the writer paſſes unnoticed, as he finds them impertinent, tedious, irkſome, and beneath the notice of a ſerious man.

It has been already obſerved that the evangeliſts did not write for the amuſement of ſceptics, but for the inſtruction of chriſtians: their ſtyle is commenſurate, and perfectly well adapted to their purpoſe; if

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the order of time be neglected in their narration, it is because it was not necessary to substantiate the facts which they relate, in these the coincidence is exact.

Matthew correctly cited the prophets: for the Messias is called *Netzer*, that is a Nazarean, by Isaias, xi, 1. Or if Nazarean be understood to signify a person separated and consecrated to God, as was Samson, to whose mother the Angel said, that he would be "*Nazer Elohim*," consecrated to God: Christ was so called by all the prophets.

The passage cited by Matthew is neither in Zachary or Jeremy—part of the passage is in one, and part in the other—the evangelist united them, citing the sense not the sound, as all good interpreters do. Thus Mark began his Gospel citing from the prophet Isaias, what is written partly by him and partly by Malachias; though it is extremely probable that the whole passage as cited by Matthew was formerly in the prophecy of Jeremy, but omitted, as were many other things, through the neglect of copyists.

It was not inconsistent with the gravity of the apostles to salute the persons, to whom their letters were addressed, or others whose spiritual welfare they sincerely desired; an immediate inspiration to every word in scripture was not necessary; a special assistance to prevent error in these things, which the apostles knew on the testimony of their senses, was fully sufficient.

The silence of heathen writers is the last refuge of our sciolists. The cause is desperate which seeks protection from a silent witness. The apologies for christianity are yet in our hands, from these we know with what virulent animosity the heathen philosophers persecuted the christian name; if the facts stated by the christian writers had not been incontrovertible, their adversaries, possessed of every means of information,

formation, would have detected the ſhadow of impoſition, and undeceived the world, their ſilent acquieſcence is equivalent to a formal avowal.

Chalcidius, in his commentaries on the *timē* of Plato, ſpeaks of the ſtar which appeared to the wiſe men of Chaldea, and of their journey to Jeruſalem; and Macrobius, in the ſecond book of his Saturnalia, ſays: "that when Auguſtus heard that amongſt the children under two years old, whom Herod king of the Jews in Syria, ordered to be maſſacred, was one of his own ſons, he ſaid, it was better to be Herod's hog than his ſon." Macrobius relates this anecdote, as he does many others, from the works of Heathen writers, extant in his time, which have ſince been loſt.

The eclipſe, which happened at the death of Chriſt, in direct oppoſition to the eſtabliſhed order, as it was at the full moon, when an eclipſe of the ſun is naturally impoſſible, is thus deſcribed by Phlegon in the 13th book of his Chronicles, or Olympiads: "on the fourth year of the 202 Olympiad was a very great eclipſe, ſurpaſſing all which have happened: the day at the ſixth hour was turned into night, the ſtars were ſeen in the heavens, an earthquake threw down many houſes in Nice, a city of Bithynia." The ſame is repeated in the Chronicle of Euſebius and St. Jerom.

Exceptions have been taken againſt the teſtimonies of theſe Heathen writers, by Anti-Chriſtian Sophiſts of modern times. Theſe exceptions have been diſcuſſed and elucidated by men of ſcience, their futility, and the vanity of their inventors, expoſed to the contempt of the learned world: as they are only intended to divert the attention of the uninformed, from the more glaring abſurdities of our Epicureans, and to introduce obſcurity in a ſubject, which

which is totally independent of the teſtimony of credulous Heathens, or incredulous Sophiſts, the writer paſſes them unnoticed.

Againſt Tertullian's appeal to the public records no exception can lie: "at the ſame inſtant," ſaid he, Ap. Ch. 1, No. 6, whilſt the ſun marked the midſt of its orbit, the day was withdrawn ..... This event, *(mundi caſum)* you have in the public archives."

Origen, in his ſecond book againſt Celſus, No. 83, ſays: "of the eclipſe, which happened under Tiberius Cæſar, in whoſe reign it is certain that Chriſt was crucified, and of the commotion, by which the earth was ſhook, I think Phlegon makes mention in the 13th or 14th book of his Chronicles."

Lucian, the martyr, a man well verſed in hiſtory, ſacred and profane, told his Judges with confidence: "conſult your annals, and you will find that in Pilate's time, when Chriſt ſuffered, the ſun fled at mid-day, and the day was interrupted." See Ruf. Lib. 9, Cap. 6°, Hiſt. Eccl.

The fact was indiſputable, known to the world, to friends and enemies, hence the apologiſts of Chriſtianity inceſſantly appealed to it, and without a contradiction.

We know that Chriſt foretold that his diſciples would be expoſed to ſufferings, and we know from Heathen writers, that this prediction was literally verified: Suetonius, in the life of Claudius, Ch. 15; Tacitus, in his annals, book 15; Pliny, the younger, in the 10th book of his epiſtles, Ch. 94, deſcribe, in part, the ſufferings of Chriſtians: if they had not, the perſecutions are of ſuch notoriety that even Atheiſtical effrontery does not diſpute them.

The teſtimony of theſe heathen philoſophers, who embraced the chriſtian faith, were its apologiſts, and its victims, is unexceptionable: men of ſenſe and ſcience,

ence, who renounce pleaſures and honors to profeſs a religion, which promiſes its votaries nothing but ſufferings and death in this world, muſt have irreſiſtible evidence of its truth.

Quadratus, a philoſopher converted by the Apoſtles, eſteemed and honored by the heathens as an ornament to the city of Athens, in the apology which he offered to the Roman Emperor Adrien, ſhews the difference between the miracles of Chriſt, and the deluſions of magicians: "the miracles of our Saviour," ſaid he, "were permanent, becauſe they were real and true—the ſick healed, and the dead raiſed, did not only appear reinſtated, but continued ſo, and that not only whilſt Chriſt remained on earth, but long after he had retired, ſo that ſome of them came down to our times." See Euſeb. Ecc. Hiſt. Lib. 4, Cap. 3; and St. Jerom, in Cato. 19, and Ep. 84.

Ariſtides, a platonic philoſopher, preſented an apology to the ſame Emperor. It was extant in St. Jerom's time and thought by him a maſter-piece of eloquence and erudition.

Theophilus, a man deeply verſed in all the ſcience of the heathen philoſophers, and in their different ſyſtems of mythology, as appears from his books to Autolycus, yet extant, vindicating the chriſtian religion from the calumnious invectives of his heathen friend, ſays: "Do not be incredulous, I did not believe the reſurrection of the dead formerly, but now I do, ſince I have more attentively conſidered the ſubject, after falling on the writings of the Holy Prophets, who foretold things now paſt as they have happened, things now preſent, as they do happen, and future events in the ſame order as they will happen." See B. 1, No. 14.

Athenagoras, alſo an Athenian philoſopher, wrote a defence of the reſurrection of the dead, a ſolid and methodical

methodical work; in it he ſolves all the difficulties which have been ſtated againſt that article of doctrine ſo mortifying to the ſons of pleaſure, ſo terrible to our epicurean ſceptics and ſcioliſts.

It is ſtated againſt the authority of St. Luke, that the enrolment of the people of the Roman Empire, which he mentions to have been ordered by Auguſtus, is not noticed by any heathen writer in the life of that Prince; nor does it appear that Cyrinus was then Preſident of Syria: to this the writer replies, that whether noticed by heathen writers or not, which he leaves to hiſtorians and chronologiſts to diſcuſs, it is not the leſs true that this enrolment was made by Cyrinus, who was, whether then, before or after, is uſeleſs to inquire, Preſident of Syria: for Joſephus ſays: Ant. Lib. 18, Cap. 1, No. 1, "In the mean time, Cyrinus, one of the Roman ſenators, ... came into Syria with a few ſoldiers, ſent by Cæſar to do juſtice to the people, and alſo that an enrolment of their poſſeſſions ſhould be made . . . though the Jews at firſt could not bear the name of enrolment, with patience, they, by little and little, ceaſed to give it any oppoſition." If it be true, as ſome modern chronologiſts, who agree in nothing but the phrenzy of contradicting antiquity, pretend, that Cyrinus was not yet appointed Governor, he muſt have been ſent by an extraordinary commiſſion, and it is unqueſtionably true, that he was Preſident of Syria, and dead ſome time before St. Luke wrote his Goſpel. The Evangeliſt did, therefore, with great propriety, call him *Preſident*. All writers deſignate a man by his moſt honorable title.

If St. Luke had been an impoſtor, he muſt have been ſenſeleſs to publiſh a ſuppoſed event of ſuch a public nature, that the impoſition muſt have been immediately detected, nor would the Jews have

omitted it. We find even Julian, the apoſtate, acknowledge it: "that Jeſus, ſays he, whom you preach was one of Cæſar's ſubjects, if you do not believe this, I will demonſtrate it: you ſay that he and his father and mother were enroled under Cyrinus." See Cyril, Lib. 6°.

The divine original of the ſcriptures eſtabliſhed beyond the poſſibility of a doubt, renders the Atheiſt, the Deiſt, the Sceptic, in a word, the whole tribe of modern anti-chriſtians, inexcuſable.

Whether they have been tranſmitted entire or interpolated; whether ſome entire books or parts of books have been ſuppoſed or not, is a queſtion which is not to be diſcuſſed with the Atheiſt or the Deiſt: for if it be true that any one book, or any one verſe of a book, be divinely inſpired; or that any one miracle has been wrought to authenticate revelation, the Atheiſt and Deiſt are defenceleſs.

To pretend that all the Scriptures have been loſt, or interpolated, through the neglect or malice of man, is to deny a Providence, and turn Atheiſt: however great the malice of man, or criminal his neglect, it can neither counteract the views of providence, nor render its cares ineffectual. To theſe cares the world was not more ſubject when God, in his mercy, enlightened it by a revelation of his divine will than ſince. The meaſures immediately adopted for the preſervation of the ſcriptures, and ſince purſued, rendered a material loſs, or interpolation, impoſſible: They were entruſted to a prieſthood divinely inſtituted, to men of ſenſe, of ſcience and influence, who were officially obliged to ſtudy them, and explain them to the people at large, in whoſe hands were numberleſs copies. This prieſthood, though confined to one tribe in the old law, is, in the new law, compoſed of men of ſcience promiſcuouſly taken from

from all the different tongues and nations of the world. Theſe, immediately on the eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity, poſſeſſed the ſcriptures, and continue to poſſeſs them, in the original languages, and in their different verſions. They are officially obliged to prevent interpolations or ſuppoſitions; if any ſuch be attempted, either through the malice of impoſtors, or the neglect of tranſcribers, it is immediately detected; its diſagreement with authentic copies proves it ſpurious, and it is of courſe rejected.

Many facts and circumſtances, intereſting at the time of their inſertion, have long ſince ceaſed to intereſt the world; theſe cannot be conſidered objects of providential protection, which does not extend to things abſolutely uſeleſs: it protects the fly while it exiſts, but not its memory. Such objects do not claim a ſtrict attention in tranſcribers: the names of perſons, of towns, of birds, of beaſts, of fiſhes, and many other things, which do not at all intereſt us, may be ſubject to alterations. The ſimilarity of ſome letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in which a difference is ſcarcely diſcernable, muſt have cauſed ſome changes, more particularly, in numbers expreſſed by theſe letters. Theſe being matters of indifference eaſily eſcape notice. In different verſions a difference is unavoidable, from the nature of the Hebrew language, which has no vowels: the maſſoretic points are of late invention. Affixing different points to the ſame conſonants, muſt give a different ſenſe. It is a peculiarity of this language, and its derivatives, that the ſame ſentence conveys many literal ſenſes equally true, and perhaps equally intended by the writer. But leading facts, ſpeculative doctrines, and moral maxims, are at all times equally intereſting, the objects of a protecting providence, commanding the attention of tranſcribers and readers, and are invariably the ſame.

The

The creation of the world, the prevarication of Adam, the deluge, the vocation of Abraham, the legation of Moſes, the miraculous paſſage through the Red Sea, the inſtitution of the Levitical prieſthood; the birth, miniſtry, miracles, the death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of Jeſus Chriſt, the great maxims of his morality, the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, the miſſion of the apoſtles, their ſucceſs in eſtabliſhing chriſtianity according to Chriſt's promiſe. Theſe, and many other facts, are deſcribed in the ſame manner in originals, verſions, tranſcripts, in a word in all languages, to make any alteration in theſe is not, nor was not, at any time, within the range of human power.

The writer here diſmiſſes the Atheiſt, the Deiſt, the modern Sciolift, the whole ſquad of Anti-Chriſtian ſcribblers from his mind and his paper, without even a diſtant hope of their converſion. "The fool ſaid in his heart there is no God." This language was ſpoken in David's time; the fool continues to ſpeak the ſame language ſtill, and will whilſt the world continues. All reaſoning is loſt on the wretch whom God deſpiſes; "ſpeak not, ſays the wiſe man, in the ears of fools, they will deſpiſe the inſtruction," Pro. xxiii. 9.

E. B. V. G. Que.